LEONIDAS.

A

POEM.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

—— Θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκα,
Τί κε τις ἀνώνυμον γῆρας, ἐν σκότω
Καθήμενος, ἕψοι μάταν, ἁπάντων
Καλῶν ἄμμορος.

PIND. OLYMP. OD. I.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By RICHARD GLOVER, Esq;

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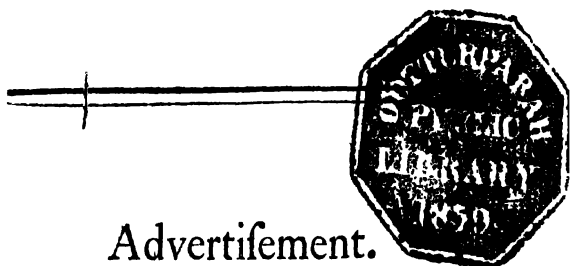
Advertiſement.

THE Editors of this Edition think it their duty to inform the reader, that very conſiderable alterations and improvements have been made in it.— The poem is not only enlarged by the addition of THREE entire NEW BOOKS, and alſo of ſeveral new Characters, interſperſed, but the whole has undergone ſo accurate a review, that, ſcarcely, one page in it has eſcaped emendation. — When it is remembered, with what univerſal applauſe LEONIDAS was at firſt (now above thirty years ago) received by the publick, and with what pleaſure it has been read ever ſince, it muſt ſurely afford, to every perſon

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of taſte, great ſatisfaction, to ſee a performance, ſo long, and ſo juſtly celebrated, making its appearance anew, and with ſuch advantages; receiving, as it were, the ſtamp of Fame, its laſt Imprimatur, from the hand of the ingenious and elegant Author.

PRE-

PREFACE.

TO illuſtrate the following poem, to vindicate the ſubject from the cenſure of improbability, and to ſhew by the concurring evidence of the beſt hiſtorians, that ſuch diſintereſted public virtue did once exiſt, I have thought, it would not be improper to prefix the ſubſequent narration.

WHILE Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Perſia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedæmon, both deſcended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately expoſed by an uncertain rumour, which render'd his legitimacy ſuſpected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had conceived a perſonal reſentment againſt him; for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, perſuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi; and was aſſiſted in his perfidious deſigns by a near relation of Demaratus, nam'd Leutychides, who aſpir'd to ſucceed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the prieſteſs of Delphi, who declared Demaratus not legitimate. Thus by the baſe practices of his colleague, Cleomenes, and of his kinſman Leutychides, Demaratus was expell'd from his regal office in the commonwealth, a Lacedæmonian, diſtinguiſh'd in action and counſel, and the only king of Sparta,

 who

who by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race, had increas'd the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment, and, retiring into Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leutychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes, Leonidas became king, who rul'd in conjunction with this Leutychides, when Xerxes, the son of Darius invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces, which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and publickly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world, wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censur'd by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falshood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority, which have procured to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the father of history. On the first news of this attempt on their liberty, a convention, composed of deputies from the several states of Greece, was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who returned with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedæmon would be entirely destroyed. Leonidas immediately offered to sacrifice his life for the

preservation

preſervation of Lacedæmon; and, marching to Thermopylæ, poſſeſſed himſelf of that important paſs with three hundred of his countrymen, who with the forces of ſome other cities in the Peloponneſus, together with the Thebans, Theſpians, and the troops of thoſe ſtates, which adjoined to Thermopylæ, compoſed an army of near eight thouſand men.

XERXES was now advanced, as far as Theſſalia; when hearing, that a ſmall body of Grecians was aſſembled at Thermopylæ, with ſome Lacedæmons at their head, and among the reſt Leonidas, a deſcendant of Hercules, he diſpatched a ſingle horſeman before to obſerve their numbers, and diſcover their deſigns. When this horſeman approached, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay concealed behind a rampart, formerly raiſed by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ on the ſide of Greece; ſo that his whole attention was engaged by thoſe, who were on guard before the wall, and who at that inſtant chanced to be the Lacedæmonians. Their manner and geſtures greatly aſtoniſhed the Perſian. Some were amuſing themſelves in gymnaſtic exerciſes; others were combing their hair; and all diſcovered a total diſregard of him, whom they ſuffered to depart, and report to Xerxes, what he had ſeen: which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he ſent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and required him to explain this ſtrange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus informed him, that it was a cuſtom among the Spartans to comb down and adjuſt their hair, when they were determined to fight till the laſt extremity. Xerxes notwithſtanding, in the confidence of his power, ſent ambaſſadors to the Grecians to demand their arms, to bid them

disperse, and become his friends and allies; which proposals being received with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attacked the Grecians, and were soon repulsed with great slaughter; fresh troops still succeeded; but with no better fortune, than the first, being opposed to an enemy not only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnished with better arms both offensive and defensive.

PLUTARCH in his Laconic apothegms reports, that the Persian king offered to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success, as might probably have depressed the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily admitted, that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact, or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduced to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ, till he was extricated from his distress, by a Malian, named Epialtes, who conducted twenty thousand of the Persian army into Greece through a pass, which lay higher up the country among the mountains of Oeta: whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the sea-shore between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandoned their station, and put themselves

in

in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Perſians wiſely avoided an engagement, and with the utmoſt expedition march'd to Thermopylæ.

LEONIDAS no ſooner received information, that the Barbarians had paſſed the mountains, and would ſoon be in a ſituation to ſurround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat, reſerving the three hundred Spartans, and four hundred Thebans, whom as they followed him with reluctance at firſt, he now compelled to ſtay. But the Theſpians, whoſe number amounted to ſeven hundred, would not be perſuaded by Leonidas to forſake him. Their commander was Demophilus, and the moſt eminent amongſt them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the ſon of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians the moſt conſpicuous next to Leonidas, was Dieneces, who being told, that the multitude of Perſian arrows would obſcure the ſun, replied, the battle would then be in the ſhade. Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maron, are alſo recorded for their valour, and were Lacedæmonians. Megiſtias a prieſt, by birth an Acarnanian, and held in high honour at Sparta, refuſed to deſert Leonidas, though entreated by him to conſult his ſafety; but ſent away his only ſon, and remained himſelf behind to die with the Lacedæmonians.

HERODOTUS relates, that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadeſt part of Thermopylæ; where, being encompaſſed by the Perſians, they fell with great numbers of their enemies; but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others affirm, that the Grecians attacked the very camp of Xerxes in the night. Both theſe diſpoſitions are reconcileable to probability.

lity. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night, and in the morning withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Diodorus. "The Grecians, "having now rejected all thoughts of safety, prefer- "ring glory to life, unanimously called on their ge- "neral to lead them against the Persians, before they "could be apprized, that their friends had passed round "the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion, "which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, "and commanded them forthwith to dine, as men "who were to sup in Elysium. Himself in conse- "quence of this command, took a repast, as the "means to furnish strength for a long continuance, "and to give perseverance in danger. After a short "refreshment, the Grecians were now prepared, and "received orders to assail the enemies in their camp, to "put all they met, to the sword, and force a passage to "the royal pavilion; when, formed into one compact "body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they "marched against the Persians, and entered their "camp at the dead of night. The Barbarians, whol- "ly unprepared, and blindly conjecturing, that their "friends were defeated, and themselves attacked by "the united power of Greece, hurry together from "their tents with the utmost disorder and conster- "nation. Many were slain by Leonidas and his "party, but much greater multitudes by their own "troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind con- "fusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies:

"for

" for as night took away the power of discerning tru-
" ly, and the tumult was spread universally over the
" camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue.
" The want of command, of a watch-word, and of
" confidence in themselves, reduced the Persians to
" such a state of confusion, that they destroyed each
" other without distinction. Had Xerxes continued
" in the royal pavilion, the Grecians without difficul-
" ty might have brought the war to a speedy conclusi-
" on by his death; but he at the beginning of the tu-
" mult, betook himself to flight with the utmost pre-
" cipitation; when the Grecians, rushing into the
" tent, put to the sword most of those, who were
" left behind; then, while night lasted, they rang'd
" through the whole camp in diligent search of the
" tyrant. When morning appeared, the Persians,
" perceiving the true state of things, held the incon-
" siderable number of their enemies in contempt; yet
" were so terrified at their valour, that they avoided
" a near engagement; but inclosing the Grecians on
" every side, showered their darts and arrows upon
" them at a distance, and in the end destroyed their
" whole body. In this manner fell the Grecians,
" who under the conduct of Leonidas, defended the
" pass of Thermopylæ. All must admire the vir-
" tue of these men, who, with one consent, maintain-
" ing the post allotted by their country, cheerfully re-
" nounced their lives for the common safety of Greece,
" and esteemed a glorious death more eligible, than to
" live with dishonour. Nor is the consternation of

" the

"the Persians incredible. Who among those Barbari-
"ans could have conjectured such an event? Who
"could have expected, that five hundred men would
"have dared to attack a million? Wherefore shall
"not all posterity reflect on the virtue of these men,
"as the object of imitation, who, though the loss of
"their lives was the necessary consequence of their
"undertaking, were yet unconquered in their spirit;
"and among all the great names, delivered down to
"remembrance, are the only heroes, who obtained
"more glory in their fall, than others from the bright-
"est victories? With justice may they be deemed
"the preservers of the Grecian liberty, even prefera-
"bly to those, who were conquerors in the battles,
"fought afterwards with Xerxes; for the memory
"of that valour, exerted in the defence of Ther-
"mopylæ, for ever dejected the Barbarians, while
"the Greeks were fired with emulation to equal
"such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon the whole,
"there never were any before these, who attained to
"immortality through the meer excess of virtue;
"whence the praise of their fortitude hath not been
"recorded by historians only; but hath been ce-
"lebrated by numbers of poets, among others by
"Simonides the lyric."

PAUSANIAS in his Laconics, considers the defence of Thermopylæ by Leonidas, as an action superior to any atchieved by his cotemporaries, and to all the exploits of preceding ages. "Never "(says he) had Xerxes beheld Greece, and laid

"in ashes the city of Athens, had not his forces
"under Hydarnes, been conducted through a path
"over Mount Oeta; and, by that means encom-
"passing the Greeks, overcome and slain Leo-
"nidas." Nor is it improbable, that such a com-
mander, at the head of such troops, should have
maintained his post in so narrow a pass, till the
whole army of Xerxes had perished by famine.—
At the same time, his navy had been miserably
shattered by a storm, and worsted in an engage-
ment with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave
companions, so meritorious to their country, and
so glorious to themselves, hath obtained such a
high degree of veneration and applause from pass'd
ages, that few among the ancient compilers of his-
tory have been silent on this amazing instance of
magnanimity, and zeal for liberty; and many
are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some
on the whole body, others on particulars, who died
at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in
every nation conversant with learning, and at this
distance of time still rendering their virtue the ob-
ject of admiration and of praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer, than
to take this public occasion of expressing my sin-
cere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and
the sense of my obligations for the early honour
of his friendship; to him I inscribe the following
poem;

poem; and herein I ſhould be juſtified, independent of all perſonal motives, from his Lordſhip's public conduct, ſo highly diſtinguiſhed by his diſintereſted zeal, and unſhaken fidelity to his country, not leſs in civil life, than in the field: to him, therefore, a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory, and love of liberty, is due from the nature of the ſubject.

R. GLOVER.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

THE ARGUMENT.

Xerxes, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and pass'd over the Hellespont into Thrace, with a design to conquer Greece; the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner appriz'd of his march into Thrace, than they determined, without further delay, to dispute his passage at the streights of Thermopylæ, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Thessaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen, who chanced that day to be assembled, in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. Leutychides, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no farther, than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedæmon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedæmonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim. Three hun-

dred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany and die with him at Thermopylæ. Alpheus returns to the Isthmus, Leonidas after an interview with his queen departs from Lacedæmon. At the end of six days, he encamp near the Isthmus, when he is join'd by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, then waiting at the Isthmus, those, who are already possess'd of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother Polydorus in Persia.

THE virtuous Spartan, who resign'd his life
To save his country at th' Oetæan streights,
Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east
In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,
O Muse, record. The Hellespont they pass'd, 5
O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift
To Corinth flew. Her Isthmus was the seat
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns
To Lacedæmon. In assembly full
He finds the Spartan people with their kings; 10
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,
From Hercules descended. They the sons
Of Lacedæmon had conven'd to learn
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods,
That morn expected from the Delphian dome. 15
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,
And thus address'd them. For immediate war,
My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.
The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard 20
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.

HERE

HERE Alpheus paus'd. Leutychides, who ſhar'd
With great Leonidas the ſway, uproſe
And ſpake. Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.
Why from her boſom ſhould Laconia ſend 25
Her valiant race to wage a diſtant war
Beyond the Iſthmus? There the gods have plac'd
Our native barrier. In this favour'd land,
Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood
That Iſthmus inacceſſible ſecures. 30
There let our ſtandards reſt. Your ſolid ſtrength
If once you ſcatter in defence of ſtates
Remote and feeble, you betray your own,
And merit Jove's deriſion. With aſſent
The Spartans heard. Leonidas reply'd. 35

O MOST ungen'rous counſel! Moſt unwiſe!
Shall we, confining to that Iſthmian fence
Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry ſtate
Diſown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets
Unceaſing watch th' innumerable foes, 40
And truſt th' impending dangers of the field
To Sparta's well-known valour, ſhall ſhe hear,
That to Barbarian violence we leave
Her unprotected walls? Her hoary ſires,
Her helpleſs matrons, and their infant race, 45
To ſervitude and ſhame? Her guardian gods
Will yet preſerve them. Neptune o'er his main
With Pallas, pow'r of wiſdom, at their helms
Will ſoon tranſport them to a happier clime,
Safe from inſulting foes, from falſe allies, 50
And eleutherian Jove will bleſs their flight.
Then ſhall we feel the unreſiſted force

Of Perſia's navy, deluging our plains
With inexhauſted numbers. Half the Greeks,
By us betray'd to bondage, will ſupport 55
A Perſian lord, and lift th' avenging ſpear
For our deſtruction. But, my friends, reject
Such mean, ſuch dang'rous counſels, which would blaſt
Your long-eſtabliſhed honours, and aſſiſt
The proud invader. O eternal king 60
Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds!
Each low and partial paſſion thence expel!
Greece is our gen'ral mother. All muſt join
In her defence, or ſep'rate each muſt fall.

This ſaid, authority and ſhame controll'd 65
The mute aſſembly. Agis too appear'd.
He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,
Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnaſſian cliffs,
The Pythian maid unfolded heav'n's decrees.
He came; but diſcontent and grief o'ercaſt 70
His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,
Yet ſeem'd full charg'd to ſpeak. Religious dread
Each heart relax'd. On ev'ry viſage hung
Sad expectation. Not a whiſper told
The ſilent fear. Intenſely all were fix'd, 75
All ſtill, as death, to hear the ſolemn tale.
As o'er the weſtern waves, when ev'ry ſtorm
Is huſh'd within its cavern, and a breeze,
Soft-breathing, lightly with its wings along
The ſlacken'd cordage glides, the ſailor's ear 80
Perceives no ſound throughout the vaſt expanſe;
None, but the murmurs of the ſliding prow,
Which ſlowly parts the ſmooth and yielding main:

So through the wide and liftning croud no found,
No voice, but thine, O Agis, broke the air ; 85
While thus the iffue of thy awful charge
Thy lips deliver'd. Spartans, in your name
I went to Delphi. I enquir'd the doom
Of Lacedæmon from th' impending war,
When in thefe words the deity reply'd. 90

"INHABITANTS of Sparta, Perfia's arms
"Shall lay your proud and ancient feat in duft;
"Unlefs a king, from Hercules deriv'd,
"Caufe Lacedæmon for his death to mourn."

As, when the hand of Perfeus had difclos'd 95
The fnakes of dire Medufa, all, who view'd
The Gorgon features, were congeal'd to ftone,
With ghaftly eyeballs, on the hero bent,
And horror, living in their marble form ;
Thus with amazement rooted, where they ftood, 100
In fpeechlefs terror frozen, on their kings
The Spartans gaz'd : but foon their anxious looks
All on the great Leonidas unite,
Long known his country's refuge. He alone
Remains unfhaken. Rifing, he difplays 105
His god-like prefence. Dignity and grace
Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins
With ftrength Herculean. On his afpect fhine
Sublimeft virtue, and defire of fame,
Where juftice gives the laurel, in his eye 110
The inextinguifhable fpark, which fires
The fouls of patriots : while his brow fupports
Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.
Serene he cafts his looks around, and fpake.

WHY this aſtoniſhment on ev'ry face, 115
Ye men of Sparta? Does the name of death
Create this fear and wonder? O my friends,
Why do we labour through the arduous paths,
Which lead to virtue? Fruitleſs were the toil,
Above the reach of human feet were plac'd 120
The diſtant ſummit; if the fear of death
Could intercept our paſſage. But a frown
Of unavailing terror he aſſumes
To ſhake the firmneſs of a mind, which knows
That, wanting virtue, life is pain and woe, 125
That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,
And looks around for happineſs in vain.
Then ſpeak, O Sparta, and demand my life.
My heart, exulting, anſwers to thy call,
And ſmiles on glorious fate. To live with fame 130
The gods allow to many; but to die
With equal luſtre is a bleſſing, Jove
Among the chiefeſt of his boons reſerves,
Which but on few his ſparing hand beſtows.

SALVATION thus to Sparta he proclaim'd. 135
Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,
Suſpending praiſe; nor praiſe at laſt reſounds
In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n:
A reverential murmur breathes applauſe.
So were the pupils of Lycurgus train'd 140
To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb
Before their ſenate, Ephori and kings,
Nor exultation into clamour broke.
Amidſt them roſe Dieneces, and thus.

Haste to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes ſhew 145
The diſcipline of Spartans, long renown'd
In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,
Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger bend.
Fly to the gate of Greece, which open ſtands
To ſlavery and rapine. They will ſhrink 150
Before your ſtandard, and their native ſeats
Reſume in abject Aſia. Arm, ye ſires,
Who with a growing race have bleſs'd the ſtate,
That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece forbid
Delay. Heav'n ſummons. Equal to the cauſe 155
A chief behold. Can Spartans aſk for more?

Bold Alpheus next. Command my ſwift return
Amid the Iſthmian council to declare
Your inſtant march. His dictates all approve.
Back to the Iſthmus he unweary'd ſpeeds. 160

Now from th' aſſembly with majeſtic ſteps
Forth moves their god-like king, with conſcious worth
His gen'rous boſom glowing. Such the port
Of his divine progenitor; impell'd
By ardent virtue, ſo Alcides trod 165
Invincible to face in horrid war
The triple form of Geryon, or againſt
The bulk of huge Antæus match his ſtrength.

Say, Muſe, what heroes by example fir'd,
Nor leſs by honor, offer'd now to bleed? 170
Dieneces the foremoſt, brave and ſtaid,
Of vet'ran ſkill to range in martial fields
Well-order'd lines of battle. Maron next,
Twin-born with Alpheus, ſhews his manly frame.
Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen 175

Of great Leonidas, his friend, in war
His try'd companion. Graceful were his ſteps,
And gentle his demeanour. Still his ſoul
Preſerv'd the pureſt virtue, though refin'd
By arts unknown to Lacedæmon's race. 180
High was his office. He, when Sparta's weal
Support and counſel from the god's requir'd,
Was ſent the hallow'd meſſenger to learn
Their myſtic will, in oracles declar'd,
From rocky Delphi, from Dodona's ſhade, 185
Or ſea-encircled Delos, or the cell
Of dark Trophonius, round Bœotia known.
Three hundred more compleat th' intrepid band,
Illuſtrious fathers all of gen'rous ſons,
The future guardians of Laconia's ſtate. 190
Then roſe Megiſtias, leading forth his ſon,
Young Menalippus. Not of Spartan blood
Were they. Megiſtias, heav'n-enlighten'd ſeer,
Had left his native, Acarnanian ſhore;
Along the border of Eurotas choſe 195
His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,
And hoſpitably cheriſh'd, he the wreath
Pontific bore in Lacedæmon's camp,
Serene in danger, nor his ſacred arm
From warlike toil ſecluding, nor untaught 200
To wield the ſword, and poiſe the weighty ſpear.

But to his home Leonidas retir'd.
There calm in ſecret thought he thus explor'd
His mighty ſoul, while nature in his breaſt
A ſhort emotion rais'd. What ſudden grief, 205
What cold reluctance now unmans my heart,

And

And whiſpers, that I fear? Can death diſmay
Leonidas; death, often ſeen and ſcorn'd,
When clad moſt dreadful in the battle's front?
Or to relinquiſh life in all its pride, 210
With all my honours, blooming round my head,
Repines my ſoul, or rather to forſake,
Eternally forſake my weeping wife,
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?
Leonidas, awake. Shall theſe withſtand 215
The public ſafety? Hark, thy country calls.
O ſacred voice, I hear thee. At the ſound
Reviving virtue brightens in my heart;
Fear vaniſhes before her. Death, receive
My unreluctant hand. Immortal fame, 220
Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,
With wings unweary'd wilt protect my tomb.

His virtuous ſoul the hero had confirm'd,
When Agis enter'd. If my tardy lips,
He thus began, have hitherto forborne 225
To bring their grateful tribute of applauſe,
Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,
Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief
Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man,
Though Lacedæmon call thy prime regard, 230
Forget not her, ſole victim of diſtreſs
Amid the gen'ral ſafety. To aſſuage
Such pain, fraternal tenderneſs is weak.

The king embrac'd him, and reply'd. O beſt,
O deareſt man, conceive not, but my ſoul 235
To her is fondly bound, from whom my days
Their largeſt ſhare of happineſs deriv'd.

Can

Can I, who yield my breath, left others mourn,
Left thoufands fhould be wretched, when fhe pines,
More lov'd, than any, tho' lefs dear than all, 240
Can I neglect her griefs? In future days,
If thou with grateful memory record
My name and fate, O Sparta, pafs not this
Unheeded by. The life, for thee refign'd,
Knew not a painful hour to tire my foul, 245
Nor were they common joys I left behind.

So fpake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd
In tend'reft paffion. Then in eager hafte
The faithful partner of his bed he fought.
Amid her weeping children fat the queen 250
Immoveable and mute. Her fwimming eyes
Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er
Her lab'ring bofom, blotted with her tears.
As, when a dufky mift involves the fky,
The moon through all the dreary vapours fpreads 255
The radiant vefture of her filver light
O'er the dull face of nature; fo the queen,
Divinely graceful fhining through her grief,
Brighten'd the cloud of woe. Her lord approach'd.
Soon, as in gentleft phrafe his well-known voice 260
Awak'd her drooping fpirit, for a time
Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.
She gives this utt'rance to her tender thoughts.

O THOU, whofe prefence is my fole delight;
If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words 265
Can check the rapid current of diftrefs,
How am I mark'd for mifery! How long!
When of life's journey lefs, than half, is pafs'd,

And I muſt hear thoſe calming ſounds no more,
Nor ſee that face, which makes affliction ſmile. 270

THIS ſaid, returning grief o'erwhelms her breaſt.
Her orphan children, her devoted lord,
Pale, bleeding, breathleſs on the field of death,
Her ever-during ſolitude of woe,
All riſe in mingled horror to her ſight, 275
When thus in bitt'reſt agony ſhe ſpake.

O WHITHER art thou going from my arms!
Shall I no more behold thee! Oh! no more,
In conqueſt clad, o'erſpread with glorious duſt,
Wilt thou return to greet thy native ſoil, 280
And find thy dwelling joyful! Ah! too brave,
Why wouldſt thou hurry to the dreary gates
Of death, uncall'd—Another might have bled,
Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,
Leſs dear to all, and Sparta been ſecure. 285
Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears.
All with theſe babes lament a father loſt.
Alas! how heavy is our lot of pain!
Our ſighs muſt laſt, when ev'ry other breaſt
Exults in ſafety, purchas'd by our loſs. 290
Thou didſt not heed our anguiſh—didſt not ſeek
One pauſe for my inſtruction how to bear
Thy endleſs abſence, or like thee to die.

UNUTTERABLE ſorrow here confin'd
Her voice. Theſe words Leonidas return'd. 295

I SEE, I ſhare thy agony. My ſoul
Ne'er knew, how warm the prevalence of love,
How ſtrong a parent's feelings, till this hour;
Nor was ſhe once inſenſible to thee

In all her fervour to affert my fame 300
How had the honours of my name been ftain'd
By hefitation? Shameful life preferr'd
By an inglorious colleague would have left
No choice, but what were infamy to fhun,
Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more, 305
That of thy love regardlefs, or thy tears,
I rufh, uncall'd, to death. The voice of fate,
The gods, my fame, my country prefs my doom.
Oh! thou dear mourner! Wherefore fwells afrefh
That tide of woe? Leonidas muft fall. 310
Alas! far heavier mifery impends
O'er thee and thefe, if foften'd by thy tears,
I fhamefully refufe to yield that breath,
Which juftice, glory, liberty and heav'n
Claim for my country, for my fons and thee. 315
Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect
On my paternal fondnefs. Hath my heart
E'er known a paufe in love, or pious care?
Now fhall that care, that tendernefs be fhewn
Moft warm, moft faithful. When thy hufband dies 320
For Lacedæmon's fafety, thou wilt fhare
Thou and thy children the diffufive good.
I am felected by th' immortal gods
To fave a people. Should my timid heart
That facred charge abandon, I fhould plunge 325
Thee too in fhame, in forrow. Thou wouldft mourn
With Lacedæmon; wouldft with her fuftain
Thy painful portion of oppreffion's weight.
Behold thy fons now worthy of their name,
Their Spartan birth. Their growing bloom would pine 330

Deprefs'd,

Depreſs'd, diſhonour'd, and their youthful hearts
Beat at the ſound of liberty no more.
On their own merit, on their father's fame,
When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,
Before the world illuſtrious will they riſe 335
Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.

HERE paus'd the patriot. In religious awe
Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint
The ſolemn ſilence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow;
Ceas'd for a moment ſoon again to ſtream. 340
Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,
His brave companions of the war demand
Their leader's preſence. Then her griefs renew'd,
Surpaſſing utt'rance, intercept her ſighs.
Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue. 345
In ſpeechleſs anguiſh on the hero's breaſt
She ſinks. On ev'ry ſide his children preſs,
Hang on his knees, and kiſs his honour'd hand.
His ſoul no longer ſtruggles to confine
Her agitation. Down the hero's cheek, 350
Down flows the manly ſorrow. Great in woe
Amid his children, who incloſe him round,
He ſtands, indulging tenderneſs and love
In graceful tears, when thus with lifted eyes,
Addreſs'd to heav'n. Thou ever-living pow'r, 355
Look down propitious, ſire of gods and men!
O to this faithful woman, whoſe deſert
May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace!
And thou, my bright forefather, ſeed of Jove,
O Hercules, neglect not theſe thy race! 360
But ſince that ſpirit, I from thee derive,

Tranſports me from them to reſiſtleſs fate,
Be thou their guardian! Teach them like thyſelf
By glorious labours to embelliſh life,
And from their father let them learn to die. 365

Here ending, forth he iſſues, and aſſumes
Before the ranks his ſtation of command.
They now proceed. So mov'd the hoſt of heav'n
On Phlegra's plains to meet the giant ſons
Of Earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd 370
The deities embattled; while their king
Tow'r'd in the front with thunder in his graſp.
Thus through the ſtreets of Lacedæmon paſs'd
Leonidas. Before his footſteps bow
The multitude exulting. On he treads 375
Rever'd. Unſated, their enraptur'd ſight
Purſues his graceful ſtature, and their tongues
Extol and hail him, as their guardian god.
Firm in his nervous hand he gripes the ſpear.
Low, as the ankles, from his ſhoulders hangs 380
The maſſy ſhield; and o'er his burniſh'd helm
The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,
Around whoſe brows entwining laurels play,
In lofty-ſounding ſtrains his praiſe record;
While ſnowy-finger'd virgins all the way 385
Beſtrew with od'rous garlands. Now his breaſt
Is all poſſeſs'd by glory, which diſpell'd
Whate'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret
For thoſe, he left behind. The rev'rend train
Of Lacedæmon's ſenate laſt appear 390
To take their final, ſolemn leave, and grace
Their hero's parting ſteps. Around him flow

In civil pomp their venerable robes,
Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The ſhining troop
Of warriors preſs behind him, Maron here 395
With Menalippus warm in flow'ry prime,
There Agis, there Megiſtias, and the chief,
Dieneces. Laconia's dames aſcend
The loftieſt manſions; thronging o'er the roofs,
Applaud their ſons, their huſbands, as they march: 400
So parted Argo from th' Iolchian Strand
To plough the foaming ſurge. Theſſalia's nymphs,
Rang'd on the cliffs, o'erſhading Neptune's face,
Still on the diſtant veſſel fix'd their eyes
Admiring, ſtill in pæans bleſs'd the helm, 405
By Greece entruſted with her choſen ſons
For high adventures on the Colchian ſhore.

Swift on his courſe Leonidas proceeds.
Soon is Eurotas paſs'd, and Lerna's bank,
Where his victorious anceſtor ſubdu'd 410
The many-headed Hydra, and the lake
To endleſs fame conſign'd. Th' unweary'd bands
Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,
And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.
Six days inceſſant was their march purſu'd, 415
When to their ear the hoarſe-reſounding waves
Beat on the Iſthmus. Here the tents are ſpread.
Below the wide horizon then the ſun
Had dipp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night
Gleam'd from the center of th' ethereal vault, 420
And o'er the raven plumes of darkneſs ſhed
Her placid light. Leonidas detains
Dieneces and Agis. Open ſtands

The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.
As here they ſit converſing, from the hill, 425
Which roſe before them, one of noble port
Is ſeen deſcending. Lightly down the ſlope
He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew
The voice of Alpheus, whom the king addreſs'd.

O THOU, with ſwiftneſs by the gods endu'd 430
To match the ardour of thy daring ſoul,
What from the Iſthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks
Neglect to arm and face the public foe?

GOOD news give wings, ſaid Alpheus. Greece is arm'd.
The neighb'ring Iſthmus holds th' Arcadian bands. 435
From Mantinea Diophantus leads
Five hundred ſpears; nor leſs from Tegea's walls
With Hegeſander move. A thouſand more,
Who in Orchomenus reſide, and range
Along Parrhaſius, or Cyllene's brow; 440
Who near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,
Or on Alphean banks, with various chiefs
Expect thy preſence. Moſt is Clonius fam'd,
Of ſtature huge, unſhaken rock of war.
Four hundred warriors brave Alcmæon draws 445
From ſtately Corinth's tow'rs. Two hundred march
From Phlius. Them Eupalamus commands.
An equal number of Mycenæ's race
Ariſtobulus heads. Through fear alone
Of thee, and threat'ning Greece the Thebans arm. 450
A few in Thebes authority and rule
Uſurp. Corrupted with Barbarian gold,
They quench the gen'rous, eleutherian flame
In ev'ry heart. The eloquent they bribe.

By ſpecious tales the multitude they cheat, 455
Eſtabliſhing baſe meaſures on the plea
Of public ſafety. Others are immers'd
In all the ſloth of plenty, who, unmov'd
In ſhameful eaſe, behold the ſtate betray'd.
Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field, 460
The wily Anaxander is their chief
With Leontiades. To ſee their march
I ſtaid, then haſten'd to ſurvey the ſtreights,
Which thou ſhalt render ſacred to renown.

For ever mingled with a crumbling ſoil, 465
Which moulders round th' indented Malian coaſt,
The ſea rolls ſlimy. On a ſolid rock,
Which forms the inmoſt limit of a bay,
Thermopylæ is ſtretch'd. Where broadeſt ſpread,
It meaſures threeſcore paces, bounded here 470
By the ſalt ooze, which underneath preſents
A dreary ſurface; there the lofty cliffs
Of woody'd Œta overlook the paſs,
And far beyond o'er half the ſurge below
Their horrid umbrage caſt. Acroſs the mouth 475
An ancient bulwark of the Phocians ſtands,
A wall with gates and tow'rs. The Locrian force
Was marching forward. Them I paſs'd to greet
Demophilus of Theſpia, who had pitch'd
Seven hundred ſpears before th' important fence. 480
His brother's ſon attends the rev'rend chief,
Young Dythyrambus. He for noble deeds,
Yet more for temperance of mind renown'd,
In early bloom with brighteſt honours ſhines,
Nor wantons in the blaze. Here Agis ſpake. 485

Well haſt thou painted that illuſtrious youth,
He is my hoſt at Theſpia. Though adorn'd
With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune bleſs'd,
His gentle virtues take from Envy's lips
Their blaſting venom; and her baneful eye 490
Strives on his worth to ſmile. In ſilence all
Again remain, when Alpheus thus proceeds.

Platæa's choſen veterans I ſaw,
Small in their number, matchleſs in their fame.
Diomedon the leader. Keen his ſword 495
At Marathon was felt, where Aſia bled.
Theſe guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,
Unknown to ſtrangers winds an upper ſtreight,
Which by a thouſand Phocians is ſecur'd.

Ere theſe brave Greeks I quitted, in the bay 500
A ſtately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet
Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praiſe
He utter'd rapture, but auſterely blam'd
Laconia's tardy counſels; while the ſhips
Of Athens long had ſtemm'd Eubœan tides, 505
Which flow not diſtant from our future poſt.
This was the far-fam'd Æſchylus, by Mars,
By Phœbus lov'd. Parnaſſus him proclaims
The firſt of Attic poets, him the plains
Of Marathon a ſoldier, try'd in arms. 510

Well may Athenians murmur, ſaid the king.
Too long hath Sparta ſlumber'd on her ſhield.
By morn beyond the Iſthmus we will ſpread
A gen'rous banner. In Laconian ſtrains
Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame 515
Of our foreſathers. Let our deeds attract

The

The brighter muſe of Athens in the ſong
Of Æſchylus divine. Now frame thy choice.
Share in our fate; or, haſt'ning home, report,
How much already thy diſcerning mind, 520
Thy active limbs have merited from me,
How ſerv'd thy country. From th' impatient lips
Of Alpheus ſwift theſe fervid accents broke.

I HAVE not meaſur'd ſuch a tract of land,
Have not, untir'd, beheld the ſetting ſun, 525
Nor through the ſhade of midnight urg'd my ſteps
To animate the Grecians, that myſelf
Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.
Return? Ah! no. A ſecond time my ſpeed
Shall viſit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs 530
Shall at thy ſide, Leonidas, obtain
An honourable grave. And oh! amid
His country's perils, if a Spartan breaſt
May feel a private ſorrow, fierce revenge
I ſeek not only for th' inſulted ſtate, 535
But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,
Than I, and Maron, bleſs'd our father's years,
Child of his age, and Polydorus nam'd.
His mind, while tender in his op'ning prime,
Was bent to ſtrenuous virtue. Gen'rous ſcorn 540
Of pain, or danger taught his early ſtrength
To ſtruggle patient with ſevereſt toils.
Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,
When frozen ſhow'rs had ſwoln Eurotas' ſtream,
Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge 545
To breaſt the torrent. On a fatal day,
As in the ſea his active limbs he bath'd,

A ſavage

A ſavage corſair of the Perſian king
My brother naked and defenceleſs bore,
Ev'n in my ſight, to Aſia; there to waſte 550
With all the promiſe of its growing worth
His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,
Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,
The days, he wept; the ſleepleſs nights, he beat
His aged boſom. And ſhall Alpheus' ſpear 555
Be abſent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,
O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs
In that firſt ſlaughter of the barb'rous foe?

HERE interpos'd Dieneces. Their hands
He graſp'd, and cordial tranſport thus expreſs'd. 560
O THAT Lycurgus from the ſhades might riſe
To praiſe the virtue, which his laws inſpire!

THUS till the dead of night theſe heroes paſs'd
The hours in friendly converſe, and enjoy'd
Each other's virtue. Happieſt of men! 565
At length with gentle heavineſs the pow'r
Of ſleep invades their eyelids, and conſtrains
Their magnanimity and zeal to reſt:
When, ſliding down the hemiſphere, the moon
Immers'd in midnight ſhade her ſilver head. 570

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, on his approach to the Isthmus, is met by the leaders of the troops, sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies, who composed the Isthmian council. He harangues them; then proceeds in conjunction with these forces towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is join'd by Dythyrambus; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertain'd by Oileus, the public host, of the Lacedæmonian state; and the next morning is accompany'd by him in a car to the temple of Pan: he finds Medon there, the son of Oileus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is inform'd, that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.

AURORA spreads her purple beams around,
When move the Spartans. Their approach is known.
The Isthmian council, and the diff'rent chiefs,
Who lead th' auxiliar bands, advance to meet
Leonidas; Eupalamus the strong, 5
Alcmæon, Clonius, Diophantus brave
With Hegesander. At their head is seen
Aristobulus,

Ariſtobulus, whom Mycenæ's ranks
Obey, Mycenæ once auguſt in pow'r,
In ſplendid wealth, and vaunting ſtill the name 10
Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king
The chieftain ſpake. Leonidas, ſurvey
Mycenæ's race. Should ev'ry other Greek
Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eaſtern hoſt,
Believe not, we can fear, deriv'd from thoſe, 15
Who once conducted o'er the foaming ſurge
The ſtrength of Greece; who deſert left the fields
Of ravag'd Aſia, and her proudeſt walls
From their foundations levell'd to the ground.

LEONIDAS replies not, but his voice 20
Directs to all. Illuſtrious warriors, hail!
Who thus undaunted ſignalize your faith,
Your gen'rous ardour in the common cauſe.
But you, whoſe counſels prop the Grecian ſtate
O venerable ſynod, who conſign 25
To our protecting ſword, the gate of Greece,
Thrice hail! Whate'er by valour we obtain,
Your wiſdom muſt preſerve. With piercing eyes
Contemplate ev'ry city, and diſcern
Their various tempers. Some with partial care 30
To guard their own neglect the public weal.
Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,
Corruption there preſides. O fire the brave
To gen'ral efforts in the gen'ral cauſe.
Confirm the wav'ring. Animate the cold, 35
The timid. Watch the faithleſs. Some betray
Themſelves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,
Or call them back to honour. Let us all

Be link'd in ſacred union, and this land
May face the world's whole multitude in arms. 40
If for the ſpoil, by Paris borne to Troy,
A thouſand keels the Helleſpont o'erſpread;
Shall not again confederated Greece
Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give
What once ſhe gave to fame? Behold, we haſte 45
To ſtop th' invading tyrant. Till we fall,
He ſhall not pour his myriads on your plains.
But as the gods conceal, how long our ſtrength
May ſtand unvanquiſh'd, or how ſoon may yield;
Waſte not a moment, till conſenting Greece 50
Range all her free-born numbers in the field.

LEONIDAS concluded. Awful ſtepp'd
Before the ſage aſſembly one ſupreme
And old in office, who addreſs'd the king.

THY bright example ev'ry heart unites. 55
From thee her happieſt omens Greece derives
Of concord, ſafety, liberty and fame.
Go then, O firſt of mortals, go, impreſs
Amaze and terror on the barb'rous hoſt;
The free-born Greeks inſtructing life to deem 60
Leſs dear than honour, and their country's cauſe.

THIS heard, Leonidas, thy ſecret ſoul,
Exulting, taſted of the ſweet reward
Due to thy name through endleſs time. Once more
His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought 65
His native land, which he alone can ſave;
Then ſummon'd all his majeſty, and o'er
The Iſthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind
In deep arrangement. So th' imperial Ship

With

With ſtately bulk along the heaving tide 70
In military pomp conducts the pow'r
Of ſome proud navy, bounding from the port
To bear the vengeance of a mighty ſtate
Againſt a tyrant's walls. Till ſultry noon
They march; when halting, as they take repaſt, 75
Acroſs the plain before them they deſcry
A troop of Theſpians. One above the reſt
In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring ſhield,
Whoſe gold-emblazon'd orb collects the beams,
Caſt by meridian Phœbus from his throne, 80
Flames like another ſun. A ſnowy plume,
With wanton curls diſporting in the breeze,
Floats o'er his dazzling caſque. On nearer view
Beneath the radiant honours of his creſt
A countenance of youth in roſy prime, 85
And manly ſweetneſs won the fix'd regard
Of each beholder. With a modeſt grace
He came reſpectful tow'rd the king, and ſhew'd,
That all idea of his own deſert
Were ſunk in veneration. So the god 90
Of light ſalutes his empyreal ſire;
When from his altar in th' embow'ring grove
Of palmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound
Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears
In hymns his praiſes from the ſons of men, 95
He re-aſcends the high, Olympian ſeats:
Such reverential homage on his brow
O'erſhading, ſoftens his effulgent bloom
With lovelineſs and grace. The king receives
Th' illuſtrious Theſpian thus. My willing tongue 100

Would ſtyle thee Dithyrambus. Thou doſt bear
All in thy aſpect to become that name,
Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal
Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my ſoul
Deſires to know thee, and would call thee friend. 105

To him the youth. O bulwark of our weal,
My name is Dithyrambus; which the lips
Of ſome benevolent, ſome gen'rous friend
To thee have ſounded in a partial ſtrain,
And thou haſt heard with favour. In thy ſight 110
I ſtand, deputed by the Theſpian chief,
The Theban, Locrian, by the fam'd in war,
Diomedon, to haſten thy approach.
Three days will bring the hoſtile pow'rs in view.

He ſaid. The ready ſtandards are uprear'd. 115
By zeal enforc'd, till ev'ning ſhadows fall,
The march continues, then by day-ſpring ſweeps
The earlieſt dews. The van, by Agis led,
Diſplays the griſly face of battle rough
With ſpears, obliquely trail'd in dreadful length 120
Along th' indented way. Beſide him march'd
His gallant, Theſpian hoſt. The center boaſts
Leonidas the leader, who retains
The good Megiſtias near him. In the rear
Dieneces commanded, who in charge 125
Kept Menalippus, offspring of his friend,
For theſe inſtructions. Let thine eye, young man,
Dwell on the order of our varying march;
As champain, valley, mountain, or defile
Require a change. The eaſtern tyrant thus 130
Conducts not his Barbarians like the ſands

In number. Yet the diſcipline of Greece
They will encounter feeble, as the ſands,
Daſh'd on a rock, and ſcatter'd in their fall.

To him th' enquiring youth. The martial tread, 135
The flute's ſlow warble, both in juſt accord,
Entrance my ſenſes; but let wonder aſk,
Why is that tender vehicle of ſound
Preferr'd in war by Sparta? Other Greeks
To more ſonorous muſic ruſh in fight. 140

SON of my friend, Dieneces rejoins,
Well doſt thou note. I praiſe thee. Sparta's law
With human paſſions, ſource of human woes,
Maintains perpetual ſtriſe. She ſternly curbs
Our infant hearts, till paſſion yields its ſeat 145
To principle and order. Muſic too,
By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law;
Still to her plan ſubſervient melts in notes,
Which cool and ſoothe, not irritate and warm.
Thus by habitual abſtinence, apply'd 150
To ev'ry ſenſe, ſuppreſſing nature's fire,
By modes of duty, not by ardour ſway'd,
O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,
At home o'er vice and pleaſure we prevail.

O MIGHT I merit a Laconian name! 155
The Acarnanian anſwer'd. But explain,
What is the land, we traverſe? What the hill,
Whoſe parted ſummit is a ſpacious void
Admits a bed of clouds? And gracious tell,
Whoſe are thoſe ſuits of armour which I ſee 160
Borne by two Helots. At the queſtions pleas'd,
Dieneces continues. Thoſe belong

To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot,
They, disencumber'd, all at large precede
This pond'rous band. They guide a troop of slaves, 165
Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe,
Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.
This tract is Phocis. That divided hill
Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine
Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death 170
The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood
A crop will spring of victory to Greece.

And these three hundred high in birth and rank,
All citizens of Sparta . . . . cries the youth,
They all must bleed, Dieneces subjoins, 175
All with their leader. So the law decrees.

To whom with earnest looks the gen'rous youth.
Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour
Close to thy buckler? Gratitude will brace
Thy pupil's arm to manifest the force 180
Of thy instruction. Menalippus, no,
Return'd the chief. Not thou of Spartan breed,
Nor call'd to perish. Thou unwedded too
Wouldst leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,
Live to enjoy our salutary fall. 185
Reply is needless. See, the sun descends.
The army halts. I trust thee with a charge,
Son of Megistias. In my name command
Th' attendant Helots to erect our camp,
We pitch our tents in Locris. Quick the youth 190
His charge accomplish'd. From a gen'rous meal,
Where at the call of Alpheus Locris show'r'd
Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,

The ſated warriors ſoon in ſlumber loſe
The memory of toil. His watchful round 195
Dieneces with Menalippus takes.

The moon rode high and clear. Her light benign
To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling ſhew'd,
All unadorn'd, but ſeemly. Either ſide
Was fenc'd by trees high-ſhadowing. The front 200
Look'd on a chryſtal pool, by feather'd tribes
At ev'ry dawn frequented. From the ſprings
A ſmall redundance fed a ſhallow brook,
O'er ſmootheſt pebbles rippling juſt to wake,
Not ſtartle ſilence, and the ear of night 205
Entice to liſten undiſturb'd. Around,
The graſs was cover'd by repoſing ſheep,
Whoſe drowſy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

The warriors ſtopp'd, contemplating the ſeat
Of rural quiet. Suddenly a ſwain 210
Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.
Uprife the fleecy train. Each faithful dog
Is rous'd. All heedful of the wonted ſound
Their known conductor follow. Slow behind
Th' obſerving warriors move. Ere long they reach 215
A broad and verdant circle, thick inclos'd
With birches ſtraight and tall, whoſe gloſſy rind
Is clad in ſilver from Diana's car.
The ground was holy, and the central ſpot
An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb 220
Of ſkreening trees th' external circuit ſwarm'd
With ſheep and bees, each neighb'ring hamlet's wealth
Collected. Thither ſoon the ſwain arriv'd,

Whom,

Whom, by the name of Meliboeus hail'd,
A peasant throng surrounded. As their chief, 225
He nigh the altar to his rural friends
Address'd these words. O sent from diff'rent lords
With contribution to the public wants,
Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!
Speed to the slow-pac'd ox, for once impart! 230
That o'er these vallies, cool'd by dewy night,
We to our summons true, ere noon-tide blaze,
May join Oileus, and his praise obtain.

He ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,
Combin'd with bleating notes, and tinkling bells, 235
With clamour shrill from busy tongues of dogs,
Or hollow-sounding from the deep-mouth'd ox,
Along the valley herd and flock are driv'n
Successive, halting oft to harmless spoil
Of flow'rs and herbage, springing in their sight. 240
While Meliboeus marshall'd with address
The inoffensive host, unseen in shades
Dieneces applauded, and the youth
Of Menalippus caution'd. Let no word
Impede the careful peasant. On his charge 245
Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid
He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see
That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands
Our debt to nature. On a carpet dry
Of moss beneath a wholesome beech they lay, 250
Arm'd, as they were. Their slumber short retires
With night's last shadow. At their warning rous'd,
The troops proceed. Th' admiring eye of youth
In Menalippus caught the morning rays

To guide its travel o'er the landſcape wide 255
Of cultivated hillocks, dales and lawns,
Where manſions, hamlets interpos'd; where domes
Roſe to their gods through conſecrated ſhades.
He then exclaims. O ſay, can Jove devote
Theſe fields to ravage, thoſe abodes to flames? 260

The Spartan anſwers. Ravage, ſword and fire
Muſt be endur'd, as incidental ills.
Suffice it, theſe invaders ſoon, or late,
Will leave this ſoil more fertile by their blood
With ſpoils abundant to rebuild the fanes. 265
Precarious benefits are theſe, thou ſeeſt,
So fram'd by heav'n; but virtue is a good,
No foe can ſpoil, and laſting to the grave.

Beside the public way an oval fount
Of marble ſparkled with a ſilver ſpray 270
Of falling rills, collected from above.
The army halted, and their hollow caſques
Dipp'd in the lympid ſtream. Behind it roſe
An edifice, compos'd of native roots,
And oaken trunks of knotted girth unwrought. 275
Within were beds of moſs. Old, batter'd arms
Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach.
Theſe words, engraven on a tablet rude,
Megiſtias reads; the reſt in ſilence heard.
"Yon marble fountain, by Oïleus plac'd, 280
"To thirſty lips in living water flows;
"For weary ſteps he fram'd this cool retreat;
"A grateful off'ring here to rural peace,
"His dinted ſhield, his helmet he reſign'd.
"O paſſenger, if born to noble deeds 385

"Thou

"Thou wouldſt obtain perpetual grace from Jove,
"Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,
"And thy decline to hoſpitable cares.
"Reſt here; then ſeek Oïleus in his vale."

O Jove, burſt forth Leonidas, thy grace 290
Is large and various. Length of days and bliſs
To him thou giv'ſt, to me a ſhorten'd term,
Nor yet leſs happy. Grateful we confeſs
Thy diff'rent bounties, meaſur'd full to both.
Come let us ſeek Oïleus in his vale. 295

The word is giv'n. The heavy phalanx moves.
The light-pac'd Helots long, ere morning dawn'd,
Had recommenc'd their progreſs. They o'ertook
Blithe Melibœus in a ſpacious vale,
The fruitfulleſt in Locris, ere the ſun 300
Shot forth his noon-tide beams. On either ſide
A ſurface ſcarce perceptibly aſcends.
Luxuriant vegetation crouds the ſoil
With trees cloſe rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads
Of native fruitage to the ſight reveal 305
Their vig'rous nurture. There the fluſhing peach,
The apple, citron, almond, pear and date,
Pomegranates, purple mulberry and fig
From interlacing branches mix their hues
And ſcents, the paſſenger's delight; but leave 310
In the mid-vale a paſture long and large,
Exuberant in vivid verdure cropp'd
By herds, by flocks innum'rous. Neighb'ring knolls
Are ſpeckled o'er with cots, whoſe humble roofs
To herdſmen, ſhepherds, and laborious hinds 315
Once yielded reſt unbroken, till the name

Of

Of Xerxes ſhook their quiet. Yet this day
Was feſtive. Swains and damſels, youth and age,
From toil, from home enlarg'd, diſporting, fill'd
Th' enliven'd meadow. Under ev'ry ſhade 320
A hoary minſtrel ſat; the maidens danc'd;
Flocks bleated; oxen low'd; the horſes neigh'd;
With joy the vale reſounded; terror fled;
Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news
By Melibœus, haſt'ning to his lord, 325
Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd.
While with his brother Alpheus thus diſcours'd.

In this fair valley old Oïleus dwells,
The firſt of Locrians, of Laconia's ſtate
The public hoſt. Yon large pavilions mark. 330
They promiſe welcome. Thither let us bend,
There tell our charge. This ſaid, they both advance.
A hoary band receives them. One, who ſeem'd
In rank, in age ſuperior, wav'd his hand
To Melibœus, ſtanding near, and ſpake. 335

By this my faithful meſſenger I learn,
That you are friends. Nor yet th' invader's foot
Hath paſs'd our confines. Elſe, o'ercaſt by time,
My ſight would ſcarce diſtinguiſh friend, or foe,
A Grecian, or Barbarian. Alpheus then. 340

We come from Lacedæmon, of our king
Leonidas forerunners. Is he nigh?
The cordial ſenior tenderly exclaims.
I am Oïleus. Him a beardleſs boy
I knew in Lacedæmon. Twenty years 345
Are ſince elaps'd. He ſcarce remembers me.
But I will feaſt him, as becomes my zeal,
Him and his army. You, my friends, repoſe.

They

THEY ſit. He ſtill diſcourſes. Spartan gueſts,
In me an aged ſoldier you behold. 350
From Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,
Oïlean Ajax flows my vital ſtream,
Unmix'd with his preſumption. I have borne
The higheſt functions in the Locrian ſtate,
Not with diſhonour. Self-diſmiſs'd, my age 355
Hath in this valley on my own demeſne
Liv'd tranquil, not recluſe. My comrades theſe,
Old magiſtrates and warriors like myſelf,
Releas'd from public care, with me retir'd
To rural quiet. Through our laſt remains 360
Of time in ſweet garrulity we ſlide,
Recounting paſs'd achievements of our prime:
Nor wanting lib'ral means for lib'ral deeds,
Here bleſs'd, here bleſſing, we reſide. Theſe flocks,
Theſe herds and paſtures, theſe our num'rous hinds, 365
And poverty, hence exil'd, may divulge
Our generous abundance. We can ſpread
A banquet for an army. By the ſtate
Once more entreated, we accept a charge,
To age well-ſuited. By our watchful care 370
The goddeſs Plenty in your tents ſhall dwell.

HE ſcarce had finiſh'd, when the enſigns broad
Of Lacedæmon's phalanx down the vale
Were ſeen to wave, unfolding at the ſound
Of flutes, ſoft-warbling in th' expreſſive mood 375
Of Dorian ſweetneſs, unadorn'd. Around,
In notes of welcome ev'ry ſhepherd tun'd
His ſprightly reed. The damſels ſhew'd their hair,

Diverſify'd with flowrets. Garlands gay,
Ruſh-woven baſkets, glowing with the dyes 380
Of amaranths, of jaſmin, roſes, pinks
And violets they carry, tripping light
Before the ſteps of grimly-featur'd Mars
To blend the ſmiles of Flora with his frown.
Leonidas they chaunt in ſylvan lays, 385
Him the defender of their meads and groves,
Him, more than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.
While Philomela, in her poplar ſhade
Awaken'd, ſtrains her emulating throat,
And joins with liquid trills the ſwelling ſounds. 390

Behold, Oïleus and his ancient train
Accoſt Laconia's king, whoſe looks and words
Confeſs remembrance of the Locrian chief.

Thrice hail! Oïleus, Sparta's noble hoſt,
Thou art of old acquainted with her ſons, 395
Their laws, their manners. Muſical, as brave,
Train'd to delight in ſmooth Terpander's lay,
In Alcman's Dorian meaſure, we enjoy
In thy melodious vale th' unlabour'd ſtrains
Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd. 400
Our heart-felt gladneſs deems the golden age
Subſiſting, where thou govern'ſt. Still theſe tones
Of joy continu'd may thy dwellings hear!
Still may this plenty, unmoleſted, crown
The favour'd diſtrict! May thy rev'rend duſt 405
Have peaceful ſhelter in thy father's tomb!
Kind heav'n, that merit to my ſword impart!

By joy uplifted, forth Oïleus broke.
Thou doſt recal me then! O ſent to guard

Theſe

These fruits from spoil, these hoary locks from shame, 410
Permit thy weary'd soldiers to partake
Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,
Thou and thy captains. I salute them all.

The hero full of dignity and years,
Once bold in action, placid now in ease, 415
Ev'n by his look, benignly cast around,
Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,
With heart-effus'd complacency the king
Accepts the lib'ral welcome; while his troops,
To relaxation and repast dismiss'd, 420
Pitch on the wounded green their bristling spears.

Still is the evening. Under chesnut shades
With interweaving poplars spacious stands
A well-fram'd tent. There calm the heroes sit,
The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind 425
On sage discourse; while thus Oïleus clos'd.

Behold, night lifts her signal to invoke
That friendly god, who owns the drowsy wand.
To Mercury this last libation flows.
Farewell till morn. They separate, they sleep 430
All, but Oïleus, who forsakes the tent.
On Melibœus in these words he calls.
Approach, my faithful friend. To him the swain.
Thy bondman hears thy call. The chief replies
Loud for the gath'ring peasantry to heed. 435

Come, Melibœus, it is surely time,
That my repeated gift, the name of friend
Thou should'st accept. The name of bondman wounds
My ear. Be free. No longer, best of men,
Reject that boon, nor let my feeble head, 440

To

To thee a debtor, as to gracious heav'n,
Defcend and fleep unthankful in the grave.
Though yielding nature daily feels decay;
Thou doft prevent all care. The gods eftrange
Pain from my pillow, have fecur'd my breaft 445
From weeds too oft in aged foils profufe,
From felf-tormenting petulance and pride,
From jealoufy and envy at the fame
Of younger men. Leonidas will dim
My former luftre, as that filver orb 450
Outfhines the meaneft ftar; and I rejoice.
O Melibœus, thefe elect of Jove
To certain death advance. Immortal pow'rs!
How focial, how endearing is their fpeech!
How flow in lib'ral cheerfulnefs their hearts! 455
To fuch a period verging men like thefe
Age well may envy, and that envy take
The genuine fhape of virtue. Let their fpan,
Of earthly being, while it lafts, contain
Each earthly joy. Till blefs'd Elyfium fpread 460
Her ever-blooming, inexhaufted ftores
To their glad fight, be mine the grateful tafk
To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves
Our veffels large of well-fermented wine,
From all our gran'ries lift the treafur'd corn. 465
Go, load the groaning axles. Nor forget
With garments new to greet Meliffa's nymphs:
To her a triple change of veftments bear
With twenty lambs, and twenty fpeckled kids.
Be it your care, my peafants, fome to aid 470
Him your director, others to felect

Five hundred oxen, thrice a thouſand ſheep,
Of luſty ſwains a thouſand. Let the morn,
When firſt ſhe bluſhes, ſee my will perform'd.

THEY heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil 475
Was their ambition. He, unreſting, mounts
A ready car. The courſers had enroll'd
His name in Iſthmian and Nemean games.
By moon-light, floating on the ſplendid reins,
He o'er the buſy vale intent is borne 480
From place to place, o'erlooks, directs, forgets,
That he is old. Mean time the ſhades of night,
Retiring, wake Dieneces. He gives
The word. His pupil ſeconds. Ev'ry band
Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears. 485
Oïleus greets him. In his radiant car
The ſenior ſtays reluctant; but his gueſt
So wills in Spartan reverence to age.
Then ſpake the Locrian. To aſſiſt thy camp
A choſen band of peaſants I detach. 490
I truſt thy valour. Doubt not thou my care;
Nor doubt that ſwain. Oïleus, ſpeaking, look'd
On Melibœus. Skilful he commands
Theſe hinds. Him wiſe, him faithful I have prov'd
More, than Eumæus to Laertes' ſon. 495
To him th' Œtæan woods, their devious tracks
Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the paſs
Two thouſand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,
My eldeſt born their leader, Medon nam'd,
Well-exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells 500
On Œta. Sage Meliſſa ſhe is call'd,
Enlighten'd prieſteſs of the tuneful nine.

She haply may accoſt thee. Thou wilt lend
An ear. Not fruitleſs are Meliſſa's words.
Now, ſervants, bring the ſacred wine. Obey'd, 505
He, from, his ſeat upriſing, thus proceeds.
Lo! from this chalice a libation pure
To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,
To their protector, eleutherian Jove,
To his nine daughters, who record the brave, 510
To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour;
And take an old man's benediction too.
He ſtopp'd. Affection, ſtruggling in his heart,
Burſt forth again. Illuſtrious gueſt, afford
Another hour. That ſlender ſpace of time 515
Yield to my ſole poſſeſſion. While the troops,
Already glitt'ring down the dewy vale,
File through its narrow'd outlet; near my ſide
Deign to be carry'd, and my talk endure.
The king, well-pleas'd, aſcends. Slow move the ſteeds 520
Behind the rear. Oïleus graſps his hand,
Then in the fulneſs of his ſoul purſues.
Thy veneration for Laconia's laws
That I may ſtrengthen, may to rapture warm,
Hear me diſplay the melancholy fruits 525
Of lawleſs will. When o'er the Lydian plains
Th' innumerable tents of Xerxes ſpread,
His vaſſal, Pythius, who in affluent means
Surpaſſes me, as that Barbarian prince
Thou doſt in virtue, entertain'd the hoſt, 530
And proffer'd all his treaſures. Theſe the king
Refuſing, ev'n augmented from his own.

An act of fancy, not habitual grace,
A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom
Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd 535
To march from Sardis, when with humble tears
The good old man besought him. Let the king
Propitious hear a parent. In thy train
I have five sons. Ah! leave my eldest born,
Thy future vassal, to sustain my age! 540
The tyrant fell reply'd. Presumptuous man,
Who art my slave, in this tremendous war,
Is not my person hazarded, my race,
My consort? Former merit saves from death
Four of thy offspring. Him, so dearly priz'd, 545
Thy folly hath destroy'd. His body straight
Was hewn asunder. By the public way
On either side a bleeding half was cast,
And millions pass'd between. O Spartan king,
Taught to revere the sanctity of laws, 550
The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,
His fame with thine. The curses of mankind
Give him renown. He marches to destroy,
But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,
Each eminence is loaded thick with crouds, 555
From cots, from ev'ry hamlet pour'd abroad,
To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.

Ofttimes the king his decent brow inclin'd,
Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,
Which through th' instructed ear, unceasing flow'd 560
In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour
Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind
A causeway broad disclos'd an ancient pile

Of military fame. A trophy large,
Compact with crested morions, targets rude, 565
With spears and corselets, dimm'd by eating age,
Stood near a lake pellucid, smooth, profound,
Of circular expanse; whose bosom shew'd
A green-slop'd island, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,
And from its center lifting high to view 570
A marble chapel, on the massy strength
Of Doric columns rais'd. A full-wrought freeze
Display'd the sculptor's art. In solemn pomp
Of obelisks and busts, and story'd urns
Sepulchral mansions of illustrious dead 575
Were scatter'd round, o'ercast with shadows black
Of yew and cypress. In a serious note
Oïleus, pointing, opens new discourse.

Beneath yon turf my ancestors repose.
Oïlean Ajax singly was depriv'd 580
Of fun'ral honours there. With impious lust
He stain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulph
Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,
That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,
By Neptune's trident in his wrath o'erturn'd. 585
Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,
The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.
A race more pious on th' Oïlean house
Felicity have drawn. To ev'ry god
I owe my bliss, my early fame to Pan. 590
Once on the margin of that silent pool
In their nocturnal camps Barbarians lay,
Awaiting morn to violate the dead.
My youth was fir'd. I summon'd from their cots
A rustic

A ruſtic hoſt. We ſacrific'd to Pan, 600
Aſſail'd th' unguarded ruffians in his name.
He with his terrors ſmote their yielding hearts.
Not one ſurviv'd the fury of our ſwains.
Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy roſe;
Of coſtly blocks conſtructed, hence that fane, 605
Inſcrib'd to Pan th' armipotent. O king,
Be to an old man's vanity benign.
This frowning emblem of terrific war
Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.
This to Barbarian ſtrangers, ent'ring Greece, 610
Shews, what I was. The marble fount, thou ſaw'ſt,
Of living water, whoſe tranſparent flow
Reliev'd thy march in yeſter ſultry ſun,
The cell, which offer'd reſt on beds of moſs,
Shew, what I am; to Grecian neighbours ſhew 615
The hoſpitality of age. O age,
Where are thy graces, but in lib'ral deeds,
In bland deportment? Would thy furrow'd cheeks
Loſe the deformity of time? Let ſmiles
Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth, 620
Thy feeble ſteps will find - - - - Abruptly here
He paus'd. A manly warrior full in ſight
Beſide the trophy on his target lean'd,
Unknown to Sparta's leader, who addreſs'd
His rev'rend hoſt. Thou pauſeſt. Let me aſk, 625
Whom do I ſee, reſembling in his form
A demigod? In tranſport then the ſage.

It is my ſon, diſcover'd by his ſhield,
Thy brave auxiliar, Medon. He ſuſtains
My ancient honours in his native ſtate, 630

Which kindly chose my offspring to replace
Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest!
My life, a tide of joy, which never knew
A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark
Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail, 635
My long and happy course should finish here.

THE chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,
Saluting thus Leonidas. O king
Of warlike Sparta, Xerxes' host in sight
Begin to spread their multitude, and fill 640
The spacious Malian plain. The king replies.

ACCEPT, illustrious messenger, my thanks.
With such a brave assistant, as the son
Of great Oïleus, more assur'd I go
To face those numbers. With his godlike friend 645
The father, now dismounting from his car,
Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark
They all were wafted to the island fane,
Erected by Oïleus, and enrich'd
With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the eye 650
Of Sparta's gen'ral in extensive scope
Contemplates each battalion, as they wind
Along the pool; whose limpid face reflects
Their weapons, glist'ning in the early sun.
Them he to Pan armipotent commends, 655
His favour thus invoking. God, whose pow'r
By rumour vain, or echo's empty voice
Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,
Can disarray whole armies, smile on these,
Thy worshippers. Thy own Arcadians guard. 660
Through thee Oïleus triumph'd. On his son,

On me look down. Our ſhields auxiliar join
Againſt proſane Barbarians, who inſult
The Grecian gods, and meditate the ſall
Of this thy ſhrine. He ſaid, and now intent 665
To leave the iſland, on Oïleus call'd.

He, Medon anſwer'd, by his joy and zeal
Too high tranſported, and diſcourſing long,
Felt on his drowſy lids a balmy down
Of heavineſs deſcending. He, unmark'd 670
Amid thy pious commerce with the god,
Was ſilently remov'd. The good old chief
On carpets, rais'd by tender, menial hands,
Calm in the ſecret ſanctuary is laid.

His haſt'ning ſtep Leonidas reſtrains, 675
Thus fervent prays. O Maia's ſon, beſt pleas'd,
When calling ſlumber to a virtuous eye,
Watch o'er my venerable friend. Thy balm
He wants, exhauſted by his love to me.
Sweet ſleep, thou ſoft'neſt that intruding pang, 680
Which gen'rous breaſts, ſo parting, muſt admit.

He ſaid, embark'd, relanded. To his ſide
Inviting Medon, he rejoin'd the hoſt.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas arrives at Thermopylæ, about noon, on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is receiv'd by Demophilus, the commander of Thespia, and by Anaxander the Theban, treacherously recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who seeks, by a pompous description of the Persian power, to intimidate the Grecian leaders, as they are viewing the enemy's camp, from the top of Mount Oeta. He is answer'd by Dieneces and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismiss'd by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incens'd at the arrogance of Tigranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes after a conference with Anaxander, declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Melibœus, a faithful slave of Oileus, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ, for the defence of another pass in Mount Oeta.

Now

NOW in the van Leonidas appears,
With Medon ſtill conferring. Haſt thou heard,
He ſaid, among th' innumerable foes
What chiefs are moſt diſtinguiſh'd? Might we truſt
To fame, reply'd the Locrian, Xerxes boaſts 5
His ableſt, braveſt counſellor and chief
In Artemiſia, Caria's matchleſs queen.
To old Darius benefits had bound
Her lord, herſelf to Xerxes. Not compell'd,
Except by magnanimity, ſhe leads 10
The beſt-appointed ſquadron in his fleet.
No female ſoftneſs Artemiſia knows,
But in maternal love. Her widow'd hand
With equity and firmneſs for her ſon
Adminiſters the ſway. Of Doric race 15
She ſtill retains the ſpirit, which from Greece
Her anceſtors tranſplanted. Other chiefs
Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,
Save one, whom Sparta hath herſelf ſupply'd,
Not leſs, than Demaratus, once her king, 20
An exile now. Leonidas rejoins.

Son of Oïleus, like thy father wiſe,
Like him partake my confidence. Thy words
Recal an æra, ſad'ning all my thoughts.
That injur'd Spartan ſhar'd the regal ſway 25
With one—Alas! my brother, eldeſt born,
Unbleſs'd by nature, favour'd by no god,
Cleomenes. Inſanity of mind,
Malignant paſſions, impious acts deform'd
A life, concluded by his own fell hand. 30

Againſt his colleague envious he ſuborn'd
Leutychides. Him perjury and fraud
Plac'd on the ſeat, by Demaratus held
Unſtain'd in luſtre. Here Oïleus' ſon.

My future ſervice only can repay 35
Thy confidential friendſhip. Let us cloſe
The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.
Each face in tranſport glows. Now Œta rear'd
His tow'ring forehead. With impatient ſteps
On ruſh'd the phalanx, ſounding pæans high; 40
As if the preſent deity of fame
Had from the ſummit ſhewn her dazzling form,
With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,
Her adamantine trumpet in her hand
To celebrate their valour. From the van 45
Leonidas advances like the ſun,
When through dividing clouds his preſence ſtays
Their ſweeping rack, and ſtills the clam'rous wind.
The army ſilent halt. Their enſigns fan
The air no longer. Motionleſs their ſpears. 50
His eye reveals the ardour of his ſoul,
Which thus finds utt'rance from his eager lips.

All hail! Thermopylæ, and you, the pow'rs,
Preſiding here. All hail! ye ſylvan gods,
Ye fountain nymphs, who ſend your lucid rills 55
In broken murmurs down the rugged ſteep.
Receive us, O benignant, and ſupport
The cauſe of Greece. Conceal the ſecret paths,
Which o'er theſe crags, and through their foreſts wind,
Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone 60
By your immortal footſteps. O defend

Your

Your own receſſes, nor let impious war
Profane the ſolemn ſilence of your groves
Then on your hills your praiſes ſhall you hear
From thoſe, whoſe deeds ſhall tell th'approving world 65
That not to undeſervers did ye grant
Your high protect. You, my valiant friends,
Now rouſe the gen'rous ſpirit, which inflames
Your hearts ; exert the vigour of your arms :
That in the boſoms of the brave and free 70
Your memorable actions may ſurvive ;
May ſound delightful in the ear of time,
Long, as blue Neptune beats the Malian ſtrand,
Or thoſe tall cliffs erect their ſhaggy tops
So near to heav'n, your monuments of fame. 75

As in ſome torrid region, where the head
Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load ;
If from a burning brand a ſcatter'd ſpark
Invade the parching ground ; a ſudden blaze
Sweeps o'er the crackling champain : through his hoſt 80
Not with leſs ſwiftneſs to the furtheſt ranks
The words of great Leonidas diffus'd
A more than mortal fervour. Ev'ry heart
Diſtends with thoughts of glory, ſuch, as raiſe
The patriot's virtue, and the ſoldier's fire ; 85
When danger moſt tremendous in his form
Seems in their ſight moſt lovely. On their minds
Imagination pictures all the ſcenes
Of war, the purple field, the heaps of death,
The glitt'ring trophy, pil'd with Perſian arms. 90

But

But lo! the Grecian leaders, who before
Were ſtation'd near Thermopylæ, ſalute
Laconia's king. The Theſpian chief, ally'd
To Dithyrambus, firſt the ſilence breaks,
An ancient warrior. From behind his caſque, 95
Whoſe creſted weight his aged temples bore,
The ſlender hairs, all-ſilver'd o'er by time,
Flow'd venerable down. He thus began.

Joy now ſhall crown the period of my days;
And whether nigh my father's urn I ſleep; 100
Or, ſlain by Perſia's ſword, embrace the earth,
Our common parent; be it, as the gods
Shall beſt determine. For the preſent hour
I bleſs their bounty, which hath giv'n my age
To ſee the brave Leonidas, and bid 105
That hero welcome on this glorious ſhore
To fix the baſis of the Grecian weal.

Here too the crafty Anaxander ſpake.
Of all the Thebans we, rejoicing, hail
The king of Sparta. We obey'd his call. 110
O may oblivion o'er the ſhame of Thebes
A dark'ning veil extend! or thoſe alone
By fame be curs'd, whoſe impious counſels turn
Their countrymen from virtue! Thebes was ſunk,
Her glory bury'd in diſhoneſt ſloth. 115
To wake her languor gen'rous Alpheus came,
The meſſenger of freedom. O accept
Our grateful hearts, thou, Alpheus, art the cauſe,
That Anaxander from his native gates
Not ſingle joins this hoſt, nor tamely theſe, 120
My choſen friends, behind their walls remain.

Enough

Enough of words. Time preſſes. Mount, ye chiefs,
This loftieſt part of Œta. This o'erlooks
The ſtreights, and far beyond their northern mouth
Extends our ſight acroſs the Malian plain. 125
Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,
Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath march'd.

DISGUIS'D in ſeeming worth, he ended here.
The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd,
By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue, 130
His heart was falſe and abject. He was ſkill'd
To grace perfidious counſels, and to clothe
In ſwelling phraſe the baſeneſs of his ſoul,
Foul nurſe of treaſons. To the tents of Greece,
Himſelf a Greek, a faithleſs ſpy he came. 135
Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,
The Theban chiefs, and nightly counſels held
How to betray the Spartans, or deject
By conſternation. Up the arduous ſlope
With him each leader to the ſummit climbs. 140
Thence a tremendous proſpect they command,
Where endleſs plains, by white pavilions hid,
Spread like the vaſt Atlantic, when no ſhore,
No rock, no promontory ſtops the ſight
Unbounded, as it wanders; while the moon, 145
Reſplendent eye of night, in fulleſt orb
Surveys th' interminate expanſe, and throws
Her rays abroad to deck in ſnowy light
The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp;
A pow'r unrivall'd by the mightieſt king, 150
Or fierceſt conqu'ror, whoſe blood-thirſty pride,
Diſſolving all the ſacred ties, which bind

The happineſs of nations, hath upcall'd
The ſleeping fury, Diſcord, from her den.
Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes, 155
The tow'rs of Memphis, and thoſe pregnant fields,
Enrich'd by kindly Nile, ſuch armies ſwarm'd
Around Seſoſtris; who with trophies fill'd
The vanquiſh'd eaſt, who o'er the rapid ſoam
Of diſtant Tanais, o'er the ſurface broad 160
Of Ganges ſent his formidable name.
Nor yet in Aſia's far extended bounds
E'er met ſuch numbers, not when Ninus led
Th' Aſſyrian race to conqueſt. Not the gates
Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd 165
Such myriads arm'd; when, emptying all her ſtreets,
The rage of dire Semiramis they bore
Beyond the Indus; there defeated, left
His blood-ſtain'd current turbid with their dead.

Yet of the chiefs, contemplating this ſcene, 170
Not one is ſhaken. Undiſmay'd they ſtand;
Th' immeaſurable camp with fearleſs eyes
They traverſe: while in meditation near
The treach'rous Malian waits, collecting all
His pomp of words to paint the hoſtile pow'r; 175
Nor yet with falſhood arms his fraudful tongue
To feign a tale of terror. Truth herſelf
Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance
Now aids his treaſon, and with cold diſmay
Might pierce the boldeſt heart, unleſs ſecur'd 180
By dauntleſs virtue, which diſdains to live,
From liberty divorc'd. Requeſted ſoon,
He breaks his artful ſilence. Greeks and friends,
Can

Can I behold my native Malian fields,
Preſenting hoſtile millions to your ſight, 185
And not in grief ſuppreſs the horrid tale,
Which you exact from theſe ill-omen'd lips?
On Thracia's ſea-beat verge I watch'd the foes;
Where, joining Europe to the Aſian ſtrand,
A mighty bridge reſtrain'd th' outrageous waves, 190
And ſtemm'd th' impetuous current: while in arms
The univerſal progeny of men
Seem'd trampling o'er the ſubjugated flood
By thouſands, by ten thouſands. Perſians, Medes,
Aſſyrians, Saces, Indians, ſwarthy files 195
From Æthiopia, Ægypt's tawny ſons,
Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the ſtrength
Of Aſia, and of Libya. Neptune groan'd
Beneath their number, and indignant heav'd
His neck againſt th' incumbent weight. In vain 200
The violence of Eurus and the North,
With rage combin'd, againſt th' unyielding pile
Daſh'd half the Helleſpont. The eaſtern world
Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted paſs
To cover Thracia's regions. They accept 205
A Perſian lord. They range their hardy race
Beneath his ſtandards. Macedonia's youth,
The brave Theſſalian horſe with ev'ry Greek,
Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,
Aſſiſt a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods, 210
Who in a moment by thy will ſupreme
Canſt quell the mighty in their proudeſt hopes,
Canſt raiſe the weak to ſafety, O! impart
Thy inſtant ſuccour! Interpoſe thy arm!

With lightning blaſt their ſtandards! O! confound 215
With triple-bolted thunder Aſia's tents,
Whence ruſhing millions by the morn will pour
An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks.
Reſiſtance elſe were vain againſt a hoſt,
Which overſpreads Theſſalia. Far beyond 220
That Malian champain, ſtretching wide below,
Beyond the utmoſt meaſure of the ſight
From this aſpiring cliff, the hoſtile camp
Contains yet mightier numbers; who have drain'd
The beds of copious rivers with their thirſt, 225
Who with their arrows hide the mid-day ſun.

THEN we ſhall give them battle in the ſhade,
Dieneces reply'd. Not calmly thus
Diomedon. On Perſia's camp he bent
His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er, 230
Then fierce exclaim'd. Bellona, turn and view
With joyful eyes that field, the fatal ſtage,
By regal madneſs for thy rage prepar'd
To exerciſe its horrors. Whet thy teeth,
Voracious death. All Aſia is thy prey. 235
Contagion, famine, and the Grecian ſword
For thy inſatiate hunger will provide
Variety of carnage. He concludes;
While on the hoſt immenſe his cloudy brow
Is fix'd diſdainful, and their ſtrength defies. 240

MEAN time an eaſtern herald down the paſs
Was ſeen, ſlow-moving tow'rds the Phocian wall.
From Aſia's monarch delegated, came
Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill
Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs. 245

By

By them environ'd, in his tent he fits;
Where thus Tigranes their attention calls.
AMBASSADORS from Perfia's king we ftand
Before you, Grecians. To difplay the pow'r
Of our great mafter were a needlefs tafk. 250
The name of Xerxes, Afia's mighty lord,
Invincible, exalted on a throne,
Surpaffing human luftre, muft have reach'd
To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart imprefs'd
With awe, and low fubmiffion. Yet I fwear
By yon refulgent orb, which flames above,
The glorious fymbol of eternal pow'r,
This military throng, this fhew of war
Well nigh perfuade me you have never heard
That name, at whofe commanding found the banks 260
Of Indus tremble, and the Cafpian wave,
Th' Ægyptian flood, the Hellefpontic furge
Obedient roll. O impotent and rafh!
Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,
And heav'nly Xerxes, merciful and kind, 265
Deign to preferve. Refign your arms. Difperfe
All to your cities. There let humbleft hands
With earth and water greet your deftin'd lord.
As through th' extenfive grove, whofe leafy boughs
Entwining, crown fome eminence with fhade, 270
The tempefts rufh fonorous, and between
The crafhing branches roar; by fierce difdain,
By indignation thus the Grecians rous'd,
In loudeft clamour clofe the Perfian's fpeech:
But ev'ry tongue was hufh'd, when Sparta's king 275
This brief reply deliver'd from his feat.

O PERSIAN, when to Xerxes thou return'ſt,
Say, thou haſt told the wonders of his pow'r.
Then ſay, thou ſaw'ſt a ſlender band of Greece,
Which dares his boaſted millions to the field. 280

HE adds no more. Th' ambaſſadors retire.
Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines
Diomedon and Theſpia's youth conduct,
In ſlow ſolemnity they all proceed,
And ſullen ſilence; but their looks denote 285
Far more, than ſpeech could utter. Wrath contracts
The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth
Gnaſh with impatience of delay'd revenge.
Diſdain, which ſprung from conſcious merit, fluſh'd
The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face 290
Of either Perſian arrogance, incens'd
By diſappointment, lour'd. The utmoſt ſtreight
They now attain'd, which open'd on the tents
Of Aſia, there diſcov'ring wide to view
Her deep, immenſe arrangement. Then the heart 295
Of vain Tigranes, ſwelling at the ſight,
Thus overflows in loud and haughty phraſe.

O ARIMANIUS, origin of ill,
Have we demanded of thy ruthleſs pow'r
Thus with the curſe of madneſs to afflict 300
Theſe wretched men? But ſince thy dreadful ire
To irreſiſtible perdition dooms
The Grecian race, we vainly ſhould oppoſe.
Be thy dire will accompliſh'd. Let them fall,
Their native ſoil be fatten'd with their blood. 305

ENRAG'D, the ſtern Diomedon replies.
Thou baſe dependant on a lawleſs king,

Thou purple ſlave, thou boaſter, doſt thou know,
That I beheld the Marathonian field?
Where like the Libyan ſands before the wind 310
Your hoſt was ſcatter'd by Athenian ſpears;
Where thou perhaps by ignominious flight
Didſt from this arm protect thy ſhiv'ring limbs.
O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight!
Along this rocky pavement ſhalt thou lie 315
To dogs a banquet. With uplifted palms
Tigranes then. Omnipotent, ſupport
Of ſcepter'd Xerxes, Horomazes, hear!
To thee his firſt victorious fruits of war
Thy worſhipper devotes, the gory ſpoils, 320
Which from this Grecian by the riſing dawn
In ſight of either hoſt my ſtrength ſhall rend.

At length Phraortes, interpoſing, ſpake.
I too would find among the Grecian chiefs
One, who in battle dares abide my lance. 325

The gallant youth of Theſpia ſwift reply'd.
Thou look'ſt on me, O Perſian. Worthier far
Thou might have ſingled from the ranks of Greece,
Not one more willing to eſſay thy force.
Yes, I will prove before the eye of Mars, 330
How far the proweſs of her meaneſt chief
Beyond thy vaunts deſerves the palm of fame.

This ſaid, the Perſians to their king repair,
Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find
Each ſoldier, poiſing his extended ſpear, 335
His weighty buckler bracing on his arm
In warlike preparation. Through the files

Each

Each leader, moving vigilant, by praiſe,
By exhortation aids their native warmth.
Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd, 340
Who thus apart his Malian friend beſpake.

What has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,
Alas! in vain attempting to confound
The Spartan valour? With redoubled fires,
See, how their boſoms glow. They wiſh to die; 345
They wait impatient for th' unequal fight.
Too ſoon th' inſuperable foes will ſpread
Promiſcuous havock round, and Thebans ſhare
The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded paſs
Who will adventure Aſia's camp to reach 350
In our behalf? That Xerxes may be warn'd
To ſpare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck;
When his high-ſwoln reſentment like a flood,
Increas'd by ſtormy ſhow'rs, ſhall cover Greece
With deſolation. Epialtes here. 355

Whence, Anaxander, this unjuſt deſpair?
Is there a path on Œta's hills unknown
To Epialtes? Over trackleſs rocks,
Through mazy woods my ſecret ſteps can paſs.
Farewel. I go. Thy merit ſhall be told 360
To Perſia's king. Thou only watch the hour
When wanted moſt, thy ready ſuccour lend.

Mean time a wary, comprehenſive care
To ev'ry part Leonidas extends;
As in the human frame through ev'ry vein, 365
And artery minute, the ruling heart
Its vital pow'rs diſperſes. In his tent

The

The prudent chief of Locris he consults;
He summons Meliboeus by the voice
Of Agis. In humility not mean, 370
By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,
Th' ingenuous swain, by all th' illustrious house
Of Ajax honour'd, bows before the king,
Who gracious spake. The confidence bestow'd,
The praise by sage Oïleus might suffice 375
To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,
Have found thee skilful, active and discreet.
Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,
The upper streights, the Phocian camp explore.

O CONDESCENSION, Meliboeus then, 380
More ornamental to the great, than gems,
A purple robe, or diadem! The king
Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.
Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.
Oïleus will rejoice, and, smiling, say, 385
An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.

HE leads the way, while Agis, following, spake.
O swain, distinguish'd by a lib'ral mind,
Who were thy parents? Where thy place of birth?
What chance depriv'd thee of a father's house? 390
Oïleus sure thy liberty would grant,
Or Sparta's king solicit for that grace;
When in a station equal to thy worth
Thou may'st be rank'd. The prudent hind began.

IN diff'rent stations diff'rent virtues dwell, 395
All reaping diff'rent benefits. The great
In dignity and honours meet reward

For

For acts of bounty, and heroic toils.
A servant's merit is obedience, truth,
Fidelity; his recompence content. 400
Be not offended at my words, O chief.
They, who are free, with envy may behold
This bondman of Oïleus. To his trust,
His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r
From his pure model could not fail to mold 405
What, thou entitlest lib'ral. Whence I came,
Or who my parents, is to me unknown.
In childhood seiz'd by robbers, I was sold.
They took their price. They hush'd th' atrocious deed.
Dear to Oïleus and his race I throve; 410
And whether noble or ignoble born,
I am contented, studious of their love
Alone. Ye sons of Sparta, I admire
Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own
To their condition, happy in my lord, 415
Himself of men most happy. Agis bland
Rejoins. O born with talents to become
A lot more noble, which, by thee refus'd,
Thou dost the more deserve! Laconia's king
Discerns thy merit through its modest veil. 420
Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.
Long may contentment, justly priz'd, be thine.
But should the state demand thee, I foresee,
Thou wouldst like others in the field excel,
Wouldst share in glory. Blithe return'd the swain. 425

Not ev'ry service is confin'd to arms.
Thou shalt behold me in my present state

Not

Not uſeleſs. If the charge, Oïleus gave,
I can accompliſh, meriting his praiſe,
And thy eſteem, my glory will be full. 430

Both pleas'd, in converſe thus purſue their way,
Where Œta lifts her ſummits huge to heav'n
In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd
Like caſtles. Sudden from a tufted crag,
Where goats are browſing, Meliboeus hears 435
A call of welcome. There his courſe he ſtays.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Tigranes and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his Satraps, in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report, that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him; but by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs and manners. He advances to the entrance of the streights, and, surprized at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus; which occasions a conversation between them, on the mercenary forces of Persia, and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates

to Hyperanthes her apprehenſions of a defeat at Thermopylæ. She takes an accurate view of the paſs, chuſes a convenient place for an ambuſcade, and on her departure to the Perſian camp, is ſurprized by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of Mount Oeta.

THE plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt
Half round by mountains, half by Neptune lav'd.
The arduous ridge is broken deep in clefts,
Which open channels to pellucid ſtreams
In rapid flow ſonorous. Chief in fame 5
Spercheos, boaſting once his poplars tall,
Foams down a ſtony bed. Throughout the face
Of this broad champain numberleſs are pitch'd
Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood
To rich Theſſalia's confines they extend. 10
They fill the vallies, late profuſely bleſs'd
In nature's vary'd beauties. Hoſtile ſpears
Now briſtle horrid through her languid ſhrubs.
Pale die her flow'rets under barb'rous feet.
Embracing ivy from its rock is torn. 15
The lawn, diſmantled of its verdure, fades.
The poplar groves, uprooted from the banks,
Leave deſolate the ſtream. Elab'rate domes,
To heav'n devoted in receſſes green,
Had felt rude force, inſenſible and blind 20
To elegance and art. The ſtatues, buſts,
The figur'd vaſes, mutilated, lie
With chiſell'd columns, their engraven freeze,
Their architrave and cornice, all disjoin'd.

YET unpolluted, is a part reserv'd 25
In this deep vale, a patrimonial spot
Of Aleuadian Princes, who, allies
To Xerxes, reign'd in Thessaly. There grow
Inviolate the shrubs. There branch the trees,
Sons of the forest. Over downy moss 30
Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,
There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine roofs,
Wind to retreats delectable, to grots,
To sylvan-structures, bow'rs, and cooling dells,
Enliven'd all and musical with birds 35
Of vocal sweetness, in relucent plumes
Innumerably various. Lulling falls
Of liquid chrystal from perennial founts
Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen
The noble dames of Persia, here the train 40
Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,
In rich pavilions, dazzling to the sight,
Possess'd, remote from onset and surprise,
A tranquil station. Ariana here,
Ill-destin'd princess, from Darius sprung, 45
Hangs, undelighted, o'er melodious rills
Her drooping forehead. Love-afflicted fair!
All inharmonious are the feather'd choirs
To her sad ear. From flow'rs, and florid plants
To her the breezes, wafting fresh perfumes, 50
Transmit no pleasure. Sedulous in vain,
Her tender slaves in harmony with lutes
Of soothing sound their warbled voices blend
To charm her sadness. This, the precious part
Of Asia's camp, Artuchus holds in charge, 55

A Sa-

A Satrap, long experienc'd, who presides
O'er all the regal palaces. High rank'd,
Bold, resolute and faithful, he commands
The whole Sperchean vale. In prospect rise
The distant navy, dancing on the foam, 60
Th' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain,
With Xerxes' tent, august in structure plac'd
A central object to attract the eyes
Of subject millions. Thither now resort
Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find 65
Inclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,
The potentates of Asia. Near his side
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,
His gallant brothers, with Mazæus brave,
Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords. 70
Their scepter'd master from his radiant seat
Looks down imperious. So the stately tow'r
Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow
With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd
The huge extent of Babylon with all 75
Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.
This day his banners to unfurl in Greece
The monarch's will decides; but first ordains,
That grateful hymns should celebrate the name
Of Horomazes: So the Persians call'd 80
The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white
The Magi rang'd before th' unfolded tent.
Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rds the sacred flame
They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.

From Zoroastres was the song deriv'd, 85
Who on the hills of Persia from his cave,

By flow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,
Which sooth'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd,
How Horamazes, radiant source of good,
Original, immortal, fram'd the globe 90
In fruitfulness and beauty: how with stars
By him the heav'ns were spangled: how the sun,
Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light,
And genial warmth, whence teeming nature smiles,
Burst from the east at his creating voice; 95
When straight beyond the golden verge of day
Night shew'd the horrors of her distant reign,
Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,
The author foul of evil: how with shades
From his dire mansion he deform'd the works 100
Of Horomazes, turn'd to noxious heat
The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch,
That streams, exhaling, might forsake their beds,
Whence pestilence and famine: how the pow'r
Of Horomazes in the human breast 105
Benevolence and equity insus'd,
Truth, temperance, and wisdom sprung from heav'n:
When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul
With falshood and injustice, with desires
Insatiable, with violence and rage, 110
Malignity and folly. If the hand
Of Horomazes on precarious life
Sheds wealth and pleasure; swift th' infernal god
With wild excess, or av'rice blasts the joy.
Thou, Horomazes, victory dost give. 115
By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.
Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms

The

The hate of direful Arimanius ſwell'd
The Helleſpont; thou o'er its chafing breaſt
The deſtin'd maſter of the world didſt lead, 120
This day his promis'd glories to enjoy:
When Greece affrighted to his arm ſhall bend;
Ev'n as at laſt ſhall Arimanius fall
Before thy might, and evil be no more.

THE Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold, 125
From her tall ſhip between a double row
Of naval warriors, while a golden ray
Shoots from her ſtandard, Artemiſia lands.
In her enrich'd accoutrements of war, 129
The full-wrought buckler, and high-creſted helm,
In Caria firſt deviſ'd, acroſs the beach
Her tow'ring form advances. So the pine,
From Taurus hewn mature in ſpiry pride,
Now by the ſailor in its canvaſs wings
Voluminous, and dazzling pendants dreſs'd, 135
On Artemiſia's own imperial deck
Is ſeen to riſe, and overtop the grove
Of crouded maſts ſurrounding. In her heart
Deep ſcorn of courtly counſellors ſhe bore,
Who fill with impious vanity their king; 140
As when he laſh'd the Helleſpont with rods,
Amid the billows caſt a golden chain
To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow ſevere
Unbent its rigour often, as ſhe glanc'd
On her young ſon, who, pacing near in arms 145
Of Carian guiſe, proportion'd to his years,
Look'd up, and waken'd by repeated ſmiles
Maternal fondneſs, melting in that eye,

Which ſcowl'd on purpled flatterers. Her ſeat
At the right hand of Xerxes ſhe aſſumes, 150
Invited; while in adoration bow'd
Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay,
Acroſs their foreheads ſpread their ſervile palms,
As from a preſent deity, too bright
For mortal viſion, to conceal their eyes. 155
At length in abject phraſe Tigranes thus.

O Xerxes, live for ever! Gracious lord,
Who doſt permit thy ſervants to approach
Thy awful ſight, and proſtrate to confeſs
Thy majeſty and radiance. May the pow'r 160
Of Horomazes ſtretch thy regal arm
O'er endleſs nations from the Indian ſhores
To thoſe wide floods, which beat Iberian ſtrands,
From northern Tanais to the ſource of Nile!
Still from thy head may Arimanius bend 165
Againſt thy foes his malice! Yonder Greeks,
Already ſmote with frenzy by his wrath,
Reject thy proffer'd clemency. They chuſe
To magnify thy glory by their fall.

The monarch, turning to his brothers, ſpake. 170
Say, Hyperanthes, can thy ſoul believe
Theſe tidings? Sure theſe ſlaves have never dar'd
To face the Grecians, but delude our ears
With baſe impoſtures, which their fear ſuggeſts.

He frown'd, and Hyperanthes calm reply'd. 175
O from his ſervants may the king avert
His indignation! Greece was fam'd of old
For martial ſpirit, and a dauntleſs breed.
I once have try'd their valour. To my words

Abrocomes

Abrocomes can witneſs. When thy ſire 180
And ours, Darius, to Athenian ſhores
With Artaphernes brave and Datis ſent
Our tender youth; at Marathon we found,
How weak the hope, that numbers could diſmay
A foe, reſolv'd on victory, or death. 185
Yet not, as one contemptible, or baſe,
Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks
With ſuch perſiſting courage be endu'd,
Soon as the king ſhall ſummon to the field,
He ſhall behold me in the dang'rous van 190
Exalt my ſpear, and pierce the hoſtile ranks,
Or ſink beneath them. Xerxes ſwift rejoin'd.

Why over Aſia, and the Libyan ſoil
With all their nations doth my potent arm
Extend its ſcepter? Wherefore do I ſweep 195
Acroſs the earth with millions in my train?
Why ſhade the ocean with unnumber'd ſails?
Why all this pow'r, unleſs th' Almighty's will
Decreed one maſter to the ſubject world;
And that the earth's extremity alone 200
Should bound my empire? He for this reduc'd
The Nile's revolted ſons, enlarg'd my ſway
With ſandy Libya, and the ſultry clime
Of Æthiopia. He for this ſubdu'd
The Hellepontic foam, and taught the ſea 205
Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more,
That heav'n, deſerting my imperial cauſe,
With courage more, than human, will inſpire
Yon deſpicable Grecians, and expunge
The common fears of nature from their breaſts. 210

THE

THE monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began.
The king commands us to reveal our thoughts,
Incredulous he hears. But time and truth
Not Horomazes can arreſt. Thy beams 214
To inſtant light'ning, Mithra, mayſt thou change
For my deſtruction; may th' offended king
Frown on his ſervant, caſt a loathing eye;
If the aſſertion of my lips be falſe:
Our further march thoſe Grecians will oppoſe.

AMID th' encircling peers Argeſtes ſat, 220
A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,
Whoſe verdant ſummits overlook'd the waves
Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either ſtream,
Enrich'd by golden ſands, a tribute paid
To this great Satrap. Through the ſervile court 225
Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts
Of mean ſubmiſſion; none more ſkill'd to gain
The royal favour; none, who better knew
The phraſe, the look, the geſture of a ſlave;
None more deteſting Artemiſia's worth, 230
By her none more deſpis'd. His maſter's eye
He caught, then ſpake. Diſplay thy dazzling ſtate,
Thou deity of Aſia. Greece will hide
Before thy preſence her dejected face.

LAST Artemiſia, riſing ſtern, began. 235
Why ſits the lord of Aſia in his tent,
Unprofitably waſting precious hours
In vain diſcuſſion, whether yonder Greeks,
Rang'd in defence of that important paſs,
Will fight, or fly? A queſtion by the ſword 240
To be decided. Still to narrow ſtreights

By

By land, by ſea thy council hath confin'd
Each enterpriſe of war. In numbers weak
Twice have th' Athenians in Eubœa's frith
Repuls'd thy navy——But whate'er thy will, 245
Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king
The diff'rence ſee by trial in the field
Between ſmooth ſound and valour. Then diſſolve
Theſe impotent debates. Aſcend thy car.
The future ſtage of war thyſelf explore. 250
Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,
That ſuch a foe to ſplendour will ſubmit,
Whom ſteel, not gold, muſt vanquiſh. Thou provide
Thy mail, Argeſtes. Not in ſilken robes,
Not as in council with an oily tongue, 255
But ſpear to ſpear, and clanging ſhield to ſhield,
Thou ſoon muſt grapple on a field of blood.

The king aroſe——No more. Prepare my car.
The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.
We will ourſelves advance to view the foe. 260

The monarch will'd; and ſuddenly he heard
His trampling horſes. High on ſilver wheels
The iv'ry car with azure ſapphires ſhone,
Cærulean beryls, and the jaſper green,
The emerald, the ruby's glowing bluſh, 265
The flaming topaz with its golden beam,
The pearl, th' empurpled amethyſt, and all
The various gems, which India's mines afford
To deck the pomp of kings. In burniſh'd gold
A ſculptur'd eagle from behind diſplay'd 270
His ſtately neck, and o'er the royal head
Outſtretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight gen'rous ſteeds,

Which

Which on the fam'd Nifæan plain were nurs'd
In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.
Not thofe of old, to Hercules refus'd 275
By falfe Laomedon, nor they, which bore
The fon of Thetis through the fcatter'd rear
Of Troy's devoted race, with thefe might vye
In ftrength, or beauty. In obedient pride
They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air 280
They tofs their foreheads. On their glift'ning chefts
The filver manes difport. The king afcends.
Befide his footftool Demaratus fits.
The charioteer now fhakes th' effulgent reins,
Strong Patiramphes. At the fignal bound 285
Th' attentive fteeds; the chariot flies: behind,
Ten thoufand horfe in thunder fweep the field.
Down to the fea-beat margin, on a plain
Of vaft expanfion in battalia wait
The eaftern bands. To thefe th' imperial wheels, 290
By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,
Proceed. The queen of Caria and her fon
With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach
Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.
He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable hoft 295
Roll back by nations, and admit their lord
With all his Satraps. As from cryftal domes,
Built underneath an arch of pendent feas,
When that ftern pow'r, whofe trident rules the floods,
With each cærulean deity afcends, 300
Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep
Divides its bofom to th' emerging god;
So Xerxes rode between the Afian world,

On either ſide receding: when, as down
Th' immeaſurable ranks his ſight was loſt, 305
A momentary gloom o'ercaſt his mind,
While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears;
That, ſoon as time a hundred years had told,
Not one among thoſe millions ſhould ſurvive.
Whence to obſcure thy pride aroſe that cloud? 310
Was it, that once humanity could touch
A tyrant's breaſt? Or rather did thy ſoul
Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought,
That all thy pow'r was mortal? But the veil
Of ſadneſs ſoon forſook his bright'ning eye, 315
As with adoring awe thoſe millions bow'd,
And to his heart relentleſs pride recall'd.
Elate the mingled proſpect he ſurveys
Of glitt'ring files unnumber'd, chariots ſcyth'd,
On thund'ring axles roll'd, and haughty ſteeds, 320
In ſumptuous trappings clad, Barbaric pomp.
While gorgeous banners to the ſun expand
Their ſtreaming volumes of relucent gold,
Preeminent amidſt tiaras gemm'd
Engraven helmets, ſhields emboſs'd, and ſpears 325
In number equal to the bladed graſs,
Whoſe living green in vernal beauty clothes
Theſſalia's vale. What pow'rs of ſounding verſe
Can to the mind preſent th' amazing ſcene?
Not thee, whom rumour's fab'ling voice delights, 330
Poetic fancy, to my aid I call;
But thou, hiſtoric truth, ſupport my ſong,
Which ſhall the various multitude diſplay,
Their arms, their manners, and their native ſeats.

THE Persians first in scaly corselets shone, 335
A gen'rous nation, worthy to enjoy
The liberty their injur'd fathers lost,
Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength
Of Babylon and Sardis. Pow'r advanc'd
The victor's head above his country's laws. 340
Their tongues were practis'd in the words of truth,
Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,
To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steed,
To dart the javelin; but untaught to form
The ranks of war, with unconnected force, 345
With ineffectual fortitude they rush'd,
As on a fence of adamant, to pierce
Th' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,
And osier-woven targets they oppos'd
To weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields. 350
On ev'ry head tiaras rose like tow'rs,
Impenetrable. With a golden gloss
Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins
Of each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,
Well-furnished quivers on their shoulders hung, 355
And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.
Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,
The Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once
From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject east.
Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd. 360
The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,
From sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,
And white with lillies, water'd by the floods
Of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave
The costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings. 365

All other ſtreams the royal lip diſdains.
Hyrcania's race forſook their fruitful clime,
Dark in the ſhadows of expanding oaks,
To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,
Bent by its foodful burden ſheds, unreap'd, 370
Its plenteous ſeed, impregnating the ſoil
With future harveſts ; while in ev'ry wood
Their precious labours on the loaded boughs
The honey'd ſwarms purſue. Aſſyria's ſons
Diſplay their brazen caſques, unſkilful work 375
Of rude Barbarians. Each ſuſtains a mace,
O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks
Within the mighty Babylonian gates
They dwell, and where ſtill mightier once in ſway
Old Ninus rear'd its head, th' imperial ſeat 380
Of eldeſt tyrants. Theſe Chaldæa joins,
The land of ſhepherds. From the paſtures wide
There Belus firſt diſcern'd the various courſe
Of heav'n's bright planets, and the cluſtring ſtars
With names diſtinguiſh'd ; whence himſelf was deem'd 385
The firſt of gods. His ſky-aſcending fane
In Babylon the proud Aſſyrians rais'd.
Drawn from the bounteous ſoil, by Ochus lav'd,
The Bactrians ſtood, and rough in ſkins of goats
The Parícanian archers. Caſpian ranks 390
From barren mountains, from the joyleſs coaſt
Around the ſtormy lake, whoſe name they bore,
Their ſcymetars upheld, and cany bows.
The Indian tribes, a threefold hoſt compoſe.
Part guide the courſer, part the rapid car; 395

The reſt on foot within the bending cane
For ſlaughter fix the iron-pointed reed.
They o'er the Indus from the diſtant verge
Of Ganges paſſing, left a region, lov'd
By laviſh nature. There the ſeaſon bland 400
Beſtows a double harveſt. Honey'd ſhrubs,
The cinnamon, the ſpikenard bleſs their fields.
Array'd in native wealth, each warrior ſhines.
His ears bright-beaming pendants grace; his hands,
Encircled, wear a bracelet, ſtarr'd with gems. 405
Such were the nations, who to Xerxes ſent
Their mingled aids of infantry and horſe.

Now, Muſe, recite, what multitudes obſcur'd
The plain on foot, or elevated high
On martial axles, or on camels beat 410
The looſen'd mold. The Parthians firſt appear,
Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,
From woods, nor yet for warlike ſteeds renown'd.
Near them the Sogdians, Dadices arrange,
Gandarians and Choraſmians. Sacian throngs 415
From cold Imaus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,
From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,
A bound of Perſia's empire. Wild, untam'd,
To fury prone, their deſerts they forſook.
A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous axe 420
The ſavage legions arm'd. A pointed caſque
O'er each grim viſage rear'd an iron cone.
In arms like Perſians the Saranges ſtood.
High, as their knees, the ſhapely buſkins clung
Around their legs. Magnificent they trod 425
In garments richly tinctur'd. Next are ſeen

The

The Paſtian, Mycian, and the Utian train,
In ſkins of goats rude-veſted. But in ſpoils
Of tawny lions, and of ſpotted pards
The graceful range of Æthiopian ſhews 430
An equal ſtature, and a beauteous frame.
Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,
And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient ſong
Renown'd for juſtice, riches they diſdain'd,
As foes to virtue. From their ſeat remote 435
On Nilus' verge above th' Ægyptian bound
Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,
Theſe friends of hoſpitality and peace,
Themſelves uninjur'd, wage reluctant war
Againſt a land, whoſe climate, and whoſe name 440
To them were ſtrange. With hardeſt ſtone they point
The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,
Form'd of elaſtic branches from the palm,
They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd
With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians march'd 445
From where Carambis with projected brows
O'erlooks the duſky Euxine, wrapt in miſts,
From where through flow'rs, which paint his vary'd banks,
Parthenius flows. The Lydian bands ſucceed;
The Matienians, Mariandenians next; 450
To them the Syrian multitudes who range
Among the cedars on the ſhaded ridge
Of Libanus; who cultivate the glebe
Wide-water'd by Orontes; who reſide
Near Daphne's grove, or pluck from loaded palms 455
The foodful date, which cluſters on the plains

Of rich Damaſcus. All, who bear the name
Of Cappadocians, ſwell the Syrian hoſt,
With thoſe, who gather from the fragrant ſhrub
The aromatic balſam, and extract 460
Its milky juice along the lovely ſide
Of Jordan, winding, till immers'd he ſleeps
Beneath a pitchy ſurface, which obſcures
Th' Aſphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance,
To them their ancient colony are join'd, 465
Armenia's ſons. Theſe ſee the guſhing founts
Of ſtrong Euphrates cleave the yielding earth,
Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain;
Whence with collected waters, fierce and deep,
His paſſage rending through diminiſh'd rocks, 470
To Babylon he foams. Not ſo the ſtream
Of ſoft Araxes to the Caſpian glides;
He, ſtealing unperceptibly, ſuſtains
The green profuſion of Armenia's meads.

Now ſtrange to view, in ſimilar attire, 475
But far unlike in manners to the Greeks,
Appear the Lydians. Wantonneſs and ſport
Were all their care. Beſide Caÿſter's brink,
Or ſmooth Mæander, winding ſilent by,
Beſide Pactolean waves, among the vines 480
Of Tmolus riſing, or the wealthy tide
Of golden-ſanded Hermus they allure
The ſight, enchanted by the graceful dance;
Or with melodious ſweetneſs charm the air,
And melt to ſofteſt languiſhment the ſoul. 485
What to the field of danger could incite
Theſe tender ſons of luxury? The laſh

Of their fell ſov'reign drove their ſhiv'ring backs
Through hail and tempeſt, which enrag'd the main,
And ſhook beneath their trembling ſteps the pile 490
Conjoining Aſia and the weſtern world.
To them Mœonia, hot with ſulph'rous mines,
Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,
Unbleſs'd by verdure. Aſhes hide the ſoil;
Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd 495
By conflagration. Helmets preſs their brows.
Two darts they brandiſh. On their woolly veſts
A ſword is girt; and hairy hides compoſe
Their bucklers round and ſmall. The Myſians left
Olympus wood-envelop'd, left the meads, 500
Waſh'd by Caïcus, and the baneful tide
Of Lycus, nurſe to ſerpents. Next advance
An ancient nation, who in early times
By Trojan arms aſſail'd, their native land
Eſteem'd leſs dear, than freedom, and exchang'd 505
Their ſeat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours
A freezing current, for the diſtant flood
Of fiſhy Sangar. Theſe, Bithynians nam'd,
Their habitation to the ſacred feet
Of Dindymus extend. Yet there they groan 510
Beneath oppreſſion, and their freedom mourn
On Sangar now, as once on Strymon loſt.
The ruddy ſkins of foxes cloth'd their heads.
Their ſhields were faſhion'd like the horned moon.
A veſt embrac'd their bodies; while abroad, 515
Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.
But other Thracians, who their former name
Retain'd in Aſia, fulgent morions wore,

With horns of bulls in imitating brafs,
Curv'd o'er the crefted ridge. Phœnician cloth 520
Their legs infolded. Wont to chafe the wolf,
A hunter's fpear they grafp'd. What nations ftill
On either fide of Xerxes, while he pafs'd,
Their huge array difcov'ring, fwell his foul
With more, than mortal pride? The clufter'd bands 525
Of Mofchians and Macronians now appear,
The Mofynœcians, who, on berries fed,
In wooden tow'rs along the Pontic fands
Repofe their painted limbs; the mirthful race
Of Tibarenians next, whofe carelefs minds 530
Delight in play and laughter. Then advance
In garments, buckled on their fpacious chefts,
A people, deftin'd in eternal verfe,
Ev'n thine, fublime Mœonides, to live.
Thefe are the Milyans. Solymi their name 535
In thy celeftial ftrains, Pifidia's hills
Their dwelling. Once a formidable train
They fac'd the ftrong Bellerophon in war.
Now doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,
Themfelves unnerv'd by thraldom, they muft leave 540
Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece.
The Marians follow. Next is Aria's hoft,
Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,
A dreary wafte of fands, which mock the toil
Of patient culture; fave one favour'd fpot, 545
Which from the wild emerges like an ifle,
Attir'd in verdure, interfpers'd with vines
Of gen'rous nurture, yielding juice, which fcorns
The injuries of time: yet nature's hand

Had ſown their rocks with coral; had enrich'd 550
Their deſert hills with veins of ſapphirs blue,
Which on the turbant ſhine. On ev'ry neck
The coral bluſhes through the num'rous throng.
The Allarodians, and Saſperian bands,
Equipp'd like Colchians, wield a falchion ſmall. 555
Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood,
Their lances ſhort, of hides undreſs'd their ſhields.
The Colchians march'd from Phaſis, from the Strand,
Where once Medea, fair enchantreſs ſtood,
And, wond'ring, view'd the firſt advent'rous keel, 560
Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's ſide
The demigods deſcended. They repair'd
To her fell ſire's inhoſpitable hall.
His blooming graces Jaſon there diſclos'd.
With ev'ry art of eloquence divine 565
He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard,
She gaz'd in fatal raviſhment, and lov'd.
Then to the hero ſhe reſigns her heart.
Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.
She lulls the ſleepleſs dragon. O'er the main 570
He wafts the golden prize, and gen'rous fair,
The deſtin'd victim of his treach'rous vows.
The hoſtile Colchians then purſu'd their flight
In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,
Or to recal the long-forgotten wrong 575
Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece
With deſolation. Next in Median garb
A croud appear'd, who left the peopled iſles
In Perſia's gulph, and round Arabia ſtrewn.
Some in their native topaz were adorn'd, 580

From Ophiodes, from Topazos ſprung;
Some in the ſhells of tortoiſes, which brood
Around Caſitis' verge. For battle range
Thoſe, who reſide, where, all beſet with palms,
Erythras lies entomb'd, a potent king, 585
Who nam'd of old the Erythræan main.
On chariots ſcyth'd the Libyans ſat, array'd
In ſkins terrific, brandiſhing their darts
Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.
Not Libya's deſerts from tyrannic ſway 590
Could hide her ſons; much leſs could freedom dwell
Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields:
Where ſpicy Caſſia, where the fragrant reed,
Where myrrh, and hallow'd frankincence perſume
The Zephyr's wing. A bow of largeſt ſize 595
Th' Arabian carries. O'er his lucid veſt
Looſe floats a mantle, on his ſhoulder claſp'd.
Two choſen myriads on the lofty backs
Of camels rode, who match'd the fleeteſt horſe.

Such were the numbers, which, from Aſia led, 600
In baſe proſtration, bow'd before the wheels
Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more
The Malian ſand o'erſhadow? Forward rolls
The regal car through nations, who in arms,
In order'd ranks unlike the orient tribes, 605
Upheld the ſpear and buckler. But, untaught
To bend the ſervile knee, erect they ſtood;
Unleſs that, mourning o'er the ſhameful weight
Of their new bondage, ſome their brows depreſs'd,
Their arms with grief diſtaining. Europe's ſons 610
Were theſe, whom Xerxes by reſiſtleſs force

Had

Had gather'd round his ſtandards. Murm'ring here,
The ſons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd;
Here on his ſteed the brave Theſſalian frown'd;
There pin'd reluctant multitudes, of Greece 615
Redundant plants, in colonies diſpers'd
Between Byzantium and the Malian bay.

THROUGH all the nations, who ador'd his pride,
Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was paſs'd;
Nor yet among thoſe millions could be found 620
One, who in beauteous feature might compare,
Or tow'ring ſize with Xerxes. O poſſeſs'd
Of all, but virtue, doom'd to ſhew, how mean,
How weak, without her, is unbounded pow'r,
The charm of beauty, and the blaze of ſtate, 625
How inſecure of happineſs, how vain!
Thou, who could'ſt mourn the common lot, by heav'n
From none withheld, which oft to thouſands proves
Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage;
Which in conſuming ſickneſs, age, or pain 630
Becomes at laſt a ſoothing hope to all:
Thou, who could'ſt weep, that nature's gentle hand
Should lay her weary'd offspring in the tomb;
Yet could'ſt remorſeleſs from their peaceful ſeats
Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride, 635
To famine, plague and maſſacre a prey;
What didſt thou merit from the injur'd world?
What ſuff'rings to compenſate for the tears
Of Aſia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,
For all this waſte of nature? On his hoſt 640
Th' exulting monarch bends his haughty ſight,
To Demaratus then directs his voice,

MY

My father, great Darius, to thy mind
Recal, O Spartan. Gracious he receiv'd
Thy wand'ring ſteps, expell'd their native home. 645
My favour too remember. To beguile
Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth
Would ill become thee. With conſid'rate eyes
Look back on theſe battalions. Now declare,
If yonder Grecians will oppoſe their march. 650

To him the exile. Deem not, mighty lord,
I will deceive thy goodneſs by a tale
To give them glory, who degraded mine.
Nor be the king offended, while I uſe
The voice of truth. The Spartans never fly. 655

Contemptuous ſmil'd the monarch, and reſum'd.
Wilt thou, in Lacedæmon once ſupreme,
Encounter twenty Perſians? Yet theſe Greeks
In greater diſproportion muſt engage
Our hoſt to-morrow. Demaratus then. 660

By ſingle combat were the trial vain
To ſhew the pow'r of well-united force,
Which oft by military ſkill ſurmounts
The weight of numbers. Prince, the diff'rence learn
Between thy warriors, and the ſons of Greece. 665
The flow'r, the ſafeguard of thy num'rous camp
Are mercenaries. Theſe are canton'd round
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands
Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.
Them to the noon-day toil no harveſt calls, 670
Nor on the mountain falls the ſtubborn oak
By their laborious axe. Their watchful eyes

Obſerve

Obſerve not, how the flocks and heifers feed.
To them of wealth, of all poſſeſſions void,
The name of country with an empty ſound 675
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyleſs hearts,
Who ſhare no country. Needy, yet in ſcorn
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs
Enervated and ſoft, with minds corrupt, 680
From miſery, debauchery and ſloth
Are theſe to battle drawn againſt a foe,
Train'd in gymnaſtic exerciſe and arms,
Inur'd to hardſhip, and the child of toil,
Wont through the freezing ſhow'r, the wintry ſtorm 685
O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,
Or in the ſun's impetuous heat to glow
Beneath the burthen of his yellow ſheaves;
Whence on himſelf, on her, whoſe faithful arms
Infold him joyful, on a growing race 690
Which glad his dwelling, plenty he beſtows
With independence. When to battle call'd,
For them his deareſt comfort, and his care,
And for the harveſt, promis'd to his toil,
He lifts the ſhield, nor ſhuns unequal force. 695
Such are the troops of ev'ry ſtate in Greece.
One only yields a breed more warlike ſtill,
Of whom ſelected bands appear in fight,
All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe
Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden ſheaf. 700
They are devoted to ſeverer taſks
For war alone, their ſole delight and care.
From infancy to manhood they are train'd

To winter watches, to inclement ſkies,
To plunge through torrents, brave the tuſky boar, 705
To arms and wounds; a diſcipline of pain
So fierce, ſo conſtant, that to them a camp
With all its hardſhips is a ſeat of reſt,
And war itſelf remiſſion from their toil.

THY words are folly, with redoubled ſcorn 710
Returns the monarch. Doth not freedom dwell
Among the Spartans? Therefore will they ſhun
Superior foes. The unreſtrain'd and free
Will fly from danger; while my vaſſals, born
To abſolute controlment from their king 715
Know, if th' allotted ſtation they deſert,
The ſcourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.

To this the exile. O conceive not, prince,
That Spartans want an object, where to fix
Their eyes in rev'rence, in obedient dread. 720
To them more awful, than the name of king
To Aſia's trembling millions, is the law;
Whoſe ſacred voice enjoins them to confront
Unnumber'd foes to vanquiſh, or to die.

HERE Demaratus pauſes. Xerxes halts. 725
Its long defile Thermopylæ preſents.
The Satraps leave their cars. On foot they form
A ſplendid orb around their lord. By chance
The Spartans then compos'd th' external guard.
They, in a martial exerciſe employ'd, 730
Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train;
But poiſe the ſpear, protended, as in fight;
Or liſt their adverſe ſhields in ſingle ſtrife;

Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel
In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet: 735
While others calm beneath their polish'd helms
Draw down their hair, whose length of sable curls
O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here
The exile questions. What do these intend,
Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair? 740

To whom the Spartan. O imperial lord,
Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,
When full determin'd to encounter death.
Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel;
Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man, 745
All, who possess the regions unexplor'd
Beyond the Ganges, all, whose wand'ring steps
Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild
With those, who drink the secret fount of Nile:
Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay 750
Remain a stranger. Fervour from his lips
Thus breaks aloud; when, gushing from his eyes,
Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside
His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.
The keen remembrance of his former state, 755
His dignity, his greatness, and the sight
Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,
And spread amazement through the world in arms,
Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks
Review the godlike warriors, who beneath 760
His standard once victorious fought, who call'd
Him once their king, their leader; then again,
O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears

His rev'rend beard, in agony bemoans
His faded honours, his illustrious name 765
Forgotten long, his Majesty defil'd
By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd
By sordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,
Some princely palace, or stupendous fane
Magnificent in ruin nods; where time 770
From under shelving architraves hath mow'd
The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd
Th' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own
He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane. 775

O Demaratus, in this grief I see,
How just thy praises of Laconia's state.
Though cherish'd here with universal love,
Thou still deplor'st thy absence from her face,
Howe'er averse to thine. But swift relief 780
From indignation borrow. Call to mind
Thy injuries. Th' auspicious fortune bless,
Which led thee far from calumny and fraud,
To peace, to honour in the Persian court.

As Demaratus with a grateful mind 785
His answer was preparing, Persia's king
Stern interrupted. Soon as morning shines,
Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head
The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians bound.

This said, the monarch to his camp returns. 790
Th' attendant princes reascend their cars,
Save Hyperanthes, by the Carian queen

Detain'd,

Detain'd, who thus began. Impartial, brave,
Nurs'd in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart
To thee its feelings undiſguis'd reveal. 795
Thou hear'ſt thy royal brother. He demands
Theſe Grecians bound. Why ſtops his mandate there?
Why not command the mountains to remove,
Or ſink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,
Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die 800
My gratitude inſtructs me in the cauſe
Of our imperial maſter. To ſucceed
Is not within the ſhadow of my hopes
At this dire paſs. What evil genius ſways?
Tigranes, falſe Argeſtes, and the reſt 805
In name a council, ceaſeleſs have oppos'd
My dictates, oft repeated in deſpight
Of purpled flatt'rers, to embark a force,
Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine
Theſe ſons of valour to their own defence. 810
Vain are my words, The royal ear admits
Their ſound alone; while adulation's notes
In Siren ſweetneſs penetrate his heart,
There lodge enſnaring miſchief. In a ſigh.
To her the Prince. O faithful to thy lord, 815
Diſcreet adviſer, and in action firm,
What can I anſwer? My afflicted ſoul
Muſt ſeek its refuge in a feeble hope.
Thou may'ſt be partial to thy Doric race,
May'ſt magnify our danger. Let me hope, 820
Whate'er the danger, if extreme, believe,

That Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed
Not with leſs zeal, than Spartans for their laws.

They ſeparate. To Xerxes he repairs.
The queen, ſurrounded by the Carian guard, 825
Stays and retraces with ſagacious ken
The deſtin'd field of war, the vary'd ſpace,
Its depth, its confines both of hill and ſea.
Mean time a ſcene more ſplendid hath allur'd
Her ſon's attention. His tranſported ſight 830
With ecſtacy like worſhip long purſues
The pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,
Which ſhew'd their idol to the nations round,
The bounding ſteeds, capariſon'd in gold,
The plumes, the chariots, ſtandards. He excites 835
Her care, expreſs'd in theſe pathetic ſtrains.

Look on the king with gratitude. His ſire
Protected thine. Himſelf upholds our ſtate.
By loyalty inflexible repay
The obligation. To immortal pow'rs 840
The adoration of thy ſoul confine;
And look undazzled on the pomp of man
Moſt weak, when higheſt. Then the jealous gods
Watch to ſupplant him. They his paths, his courts,
His chambers fill with flatt'ry's pois'nous ſwarms, 845
Whoſe honey'd bane, by kingly pride devour'd,
Conſumes the health of kingdoms. Here the boy
By an attention, which ſurpaſs'd his years,
Unlocks her inmoſt boſom. Thrice accurs'd
Be thoſe, th' indignant heroine purſues, 850
Thoſe, who have tempted their imperial lord

To that prepoſt'rous arrogance, which caſt
Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,
Chaſtis'd with ſtripes in heav'n's offended ſight 855
The Helleſpont, and fondly now demands
The Spartans bound. O child, my ſoul's delight,
Train'd by my care to equitable ſway
And imitation of the gods by deeds
To merit their protection, heed my voice. 860
They, who alone can tame, or ſwell the floods,
Compoſe the winds, or guide their ſtrong career,
O'erwhelming human greatneſs, will confound
Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet
Their indignation hath already fall'n. 865
Perhaps our boaſted army is prepar'd
A prey, for death to vindicate their pow'r.

This ſaid, a curious ſearch in ev'ry part
Her eye renews. Adjoining to the ſtreights,
Freſh bloom'd a thicket of entwining ſhrubs, 870
A ſeeming fence to ſome ſequeſter'd ground,
By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards
Addreſs'd their ſpears to part the pliant boughs.
Held back, they yield a paſſage to the queen,
And princely boy. Delicious to their ſight 875
Soft dales, mæandring, ſhew their flow'ry laps
Among rude piles of nature. In their ſides
Of rock are manſions hewn; nor loaden trees
Of cluſter'd fruit are wanting: but no ſound,
Except of brooks in murmur, and the ſong 880
Of winged warblers, meets the liſt'ning ear.
No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form
Is ſeen, no careful huſband at his toil,

Beside her threshold no industrious wife,
No playful child. Instructive to her son 885
The princess then. Already these abodes
Are desolate. Once happy in their homes
Th' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene
Of nature's bounty, soon will savage Mars
Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs, 890
And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits
Unripe; will deafen with his clangour fell
Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,
Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains, plant,
Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here. 895
Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust
To Demaratus; while thy mother tries
With these her martial followers, what sparks,
Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame
Their sons and daughters in a stern debate 900
With other Dorians, who have never breath'd
The soft'ning gales of Asia, never bow'd
In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.
Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks
Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight 905
Were too severe a lesson. Thou mightst bleed
Among the thousands, fated to expire
By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,
Ye all-disposing rulers, but protect
Her son. She ceas'd. The lioness, who reigns 910
Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,
And prone to fury, thus, by nature taught,
Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.

Now ſlowly tow'rds the Perſian camp her ſteps
In ſilence ſhe directed; when a voice, 915
Sent from a rock, acceſſible which ſeem'd
To none, but feather'd paſſengers of air,
By this reproof detain'd her. Caria's queen
Art thou, to Greece by Doric blood ally'd?
Com'ſt thou to lay her fruitful meadows waſte, 920
Thou homager of tyrants? Upward gaz'd
Th' aſtoniſh'd princeſs. Lo! a female ſhape,
Tall and majeſtic, from th' impendent ridge
Look'd awful down. A holy fillet bound
Her graceful hair, looſe flowing, Seldom wept 925
Great Artemiſia. Now a ſpringing tear
Between her eyelids gleam'd. Too true, ſhe ſigh'd,
A homager of tyrants! Voice auſtere,
And preſence half-divine! Again the voice.

O Artemisia, hide thy Doric ſword. 930
Let no Barbarian tyrant through thy might,
Thy counſels, valiant as thou art and wiſe,
Conſume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,
Subvert the laws of Greece, her ſons enthrall.

The queen made no reply. Her breaſt-plate heav'd. 935
The tremulous attire of cov'ring mail
Confeſs'd her ſtruggle. She at length exclaim'd.

Olympian thund'rer, from thy neighb'ring hill
Of ſacred oaths remind me! Then aſide
She turns to ſhun that majeſty of form, 940
In ſolemn ſounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts
She

She feels. A painful conflict she endures
With recollection of her Doric race;
Till gratitude, reviving, arms her breast.
Her royal benefactor she recals, 945
Back to his sight precipitates her steps.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

LEO-

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence, which Agis and Melibœus bring from the upper pass, then commands a body of Arcadians with the Platæans and Thespians, to be drawn out for battle, under the conduct of Demophilus, in that part of Thermopylæ, which lies close to the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into an ambush, which Artemisia had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Clonius, but is herself repuls'd by Demophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chace to her broken forces over the plains, in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of her Carians, by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery, but pacified by Demaratus; is accompanied by him with a thousand horse, to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulchre.

AURORA

AURORA dawn'd. Leonidas arofe.
With Meliboeus, Agis, now return'd,
Addrefs'd the king. Along the mountain's fide
We bent our journey. On our way a voice
Loud from a crag on Meliboeus call'd. 5
He look'd and anfwer'd. Mycon, ancient friend!
Far haft thou driv'n thy bearded train to-day;
But fortunate thy prefence. None like thee,
Inhabitant of Œta from thy birth,
Can furnifh that intelligence, which Greece 10
Wants for her fafety. Mycon fhew'd a track.
We mounted high. The fummit, where we ftopp'd,
Gave to the fight a profpect wide o'er hills,
O'er dales and forefts, rocks, and dafhing floods
In cataracts. The object of our fearch 15
Beneath us lay, the fecret pafs to Greece,
Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.
We thence defcended to the Phocian camp,
Befet with fcatter'd oaks, which rofe and fpread
In height and fhade; on whofe fuftaining boughs 20
Were hung in fnowy folds a thoufand tents,
Containing each a Phocian heavy-mail'd
With two light-weapon'd menials. Northward ends
The vale, contracted to that narrow ftreight,
Which firft we faw with Mycon. Prudent care 25
Like yours alleviates mine, well-pleas'd the king
Reply'd. Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands
Select a thoufand fpears. To them unite
The Thefpians and Platæans. Draw their lines
Beneath the wall, which fortifies the pafs. 30
There,

There, close-embody'd, will their might repulse
The num'rous foe. Demophilus salute.
Approv'd in martial service him I name
The chief supreme. Obedient to his will
Th' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents, 35
Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.
So round their monarch in his stormy hall
The winds assemble. From his dusky throne
His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims
To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds deform, 40
Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.
Laconia's leader from the rampart's height
To battle thus the list'ning host inflames.

This day, O Grecians, countrymen and friends,
Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats, 45
Your parents, country, liberty and laws
Demand your swords. You gen'rous, active, brave,
Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,
Are now to grapple with ignoble foes,
In war unskilful, nature's basest dross, 50
And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.
Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd
By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire their cause,
Their only fruit of victory is spoil.
They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares. 55
Such is the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest,
Who fill her boasted numbers, are a croud,
Forc'd from their homes; a populace in peace
By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war
Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief 60

To bear the rapine, cruelty and ſpurns
Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine
In ſervitude to ſlaves. With terror ſounds
The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.
Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance 65
Their hands ſuſtain, encumber'd, and preſent
The mockery of war——But ev'ry eye
Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breaſts
Too long their ſwelling ſpirit have confin'd.
Go then, ye ſons of liberty; go, ſweep 70
Theſe bondmen from the field. Reſiſtleſs rend
The glitt'ring ſtandard from their ſervile graſp.
Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,
The warrior's helm profaning. Think, the ſhades
Of your foreſathers lift their ſacred brows 75
Here to enjoy the glory of their ſons.

He ſpake. Loud pæans iſſue from the Greeks.
In fierce reply Barbarian ſhouts aſcend
From hoſtile nations, thronging down the paſs.
Such is the roar of Ætna, when his mouth 80
Diſplodes combuſtion from his ſulph'rous depths
To blaſt the ſmiles of nature. Dauntleſs ſtood
In deep array before the Phocian wall
The Phalanx, wedg'd with implicated ſhields,
And ſpears protended, like the graceful range 85
Of arduous elms, whoſe interwoven boughs
Before ſome rural palace wide expand
Their venerable umbrage to retard
The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main
In lucid rows the riſing waves reflect 90
The ſun's effulgence; ſo the Grecian helms

Return'd

Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd
A ſplendour, ſcatter'd through the dancing plumes.

Down ruſh the foes. Exulting in their van,
Their haughty leader ſhakes his threat'ning lance, 95
Provoking battle. Inſtant from his rank
Diomedon burſts furious. On he ſtrides,
Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies.

Now art thou met, Barbarian. Wouldſt thou prove
Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command 100
Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.

Tigranes, turning to the Perſians, ſpake.
My friends and ſoldiers, check your martial haſte,
While my ſtrong lance that Grecian's pride confounds.

He ceas'd. In dreadful oppoſition ſoon 105
Each combatant advanc'd. Their ſinewy hands
Grip'd faſt their ſpears, high-brandiſh'd. Thrice they drove
With well-directed force the pointed ſteel
At either's throats, and thrice their wary ſhields
Repell'd the menac'd wound. The Aſian chief 110
At length, with pow'rs collected for the ſtroke,
His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.
Aſide Diomedon inclines, and ſhuns
Approaching fate; then all his martial ſkill
Undaunted ſummons. His forſaken ſpear 115
Beſide him caſt, his falchion he unſheaths,
The blade, deſcending on Tigranes' arm,
That inſtant ſtruggling to redeem his lance,
The nervous hand diſſevers. Pale affright

Unmans the Perſian; while his active foe 120
Full on his neck diſcharg'd the rapid ſword,
Which open'd wide the purple gates of death.
Low ſinks Tigranes in eternal ſhade.
His proſtrate limbs the conqueror beſtrides;
Then in a tuft of blood-diſtilling hair 125
His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk
The head disjoins, and whirls with matchleſs ſtrength
Among the adverſe legions. All in dread
Recoil'd, where'er the ghaſtly viſage flew
In ſanguine circles, and purſu'd its track 130
Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,
A barb'rous nation, whom the cheerful dawn
Of ſcience ne'er illumin'd, view on high
A meteor, waving its portentous fires;
Where oft, as ſuperſtition vainly dreams, 135
Some demon ſits amid the baneful blaze,
Diſperſing plague and deſolation round.
Awhile the ſtern Diomedon remain'd
Triumphant o'er the dire diſmay, which froze
The heart of Perſia; then with haughty pace 140
In ſullen joy among his gladſome friends
Reſum'd his ſtation. Still the hoſtile throng
In conſternation motionleſs ſuſpend
The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms.

HEAV'N! can one leader's fate appal this hoſt, 145
Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs?
Behold Phraortes. From Niphates' ridge
I draw my ſubject files. My hardy toil
Through pathleſs woods and deſerts hath explor'd
The

The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand 150
Hath from the lion rent his ſhaggy hide.
So through this field of ſlaughter will I chaſe
Yon vaunting Greek. His ardent words revive
Declining valour in the van. His lance
Then in the rear he brandiſhes. The croud 155
Before his threat'ning ire, affrighted, roll
Their numbers headlong on the Grecian ſteel.
Thus with his trident ocean's angry god
From their vaſt bottom turns the mighty maſs
Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach. 160

Tremendous frown'd the fierce Platæan chief
Full in the battle's front. His ample ſhield
Like a ſtrong bulwark prominent he rais'd
Before the line. There thunder'd all the ſtorm
Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train 165
In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.
Where'er they turn'd the formidable ſpears,
Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,
Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon
Led on the ſlaughter. From his nodding creſt 170
The ſable plumes ſhook terror. Aſia's hoſt
Shrunk back, as blaſted by the piercing beams
Of that unconquerable ſword, which fell
With lightning's ſwiftneſs on diſſever'd helms,
And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all, 175
Their multitude diſpers'd. The furious chief,
Encompaſs'd round by carnage, and beſmear'd
With ſanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends.

O Dithyrambus, let thy deeds this day
Surmount their wonted luſtre. Thou in arms, 180

Demophilus, worn grey, thy youth recal.
Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.
Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious fame
Smile on thy years. She grants thy aged hand
To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow. 185
As, when endu'd with Promethëan heat,
The molten clay respir'd; a sudden warmth
Glows in the venerable Thespian's veins;
In every sinew new-born vigour swells.
His falchion, thund'ring on Cherasmes' helm, 190
The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war
Sent forth Cherasmes. From her potent gates
He, proud in hope, her swarming numbers led.
Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,
His martial brothers. They attend his fate, 195
By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary sire
Shall o'er his solitary palace roam;
Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse
Ambition's fury, and the lust of war,
Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave. 200
NEXT by the fierce Platæan's fatal sword
Expir'd Demates, once the host and friend
Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight
He left his native bands. Of Syrian birth
In Daphné he resided near the grove, 205
Whose hospitable laurels in their shade
Conceal'd the virgin fugitive averse
To young Apollo. Hither she retir'd
Far from her parent stream. Here fables feign,
Herself a laurel chang'd her golden hair 210
To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove
Of

Of Daphné call'd, the ſeat of rural bliſs,
Fann'd by the breath of Zephyrs, and with rills
From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boaſt,
The happy rival of Theſſalia's vale, 215
Now hid for ever from Damates' eyes.

Demophilus, wiſe leader, ſoon improves
Advantage. All the vet'rans of his troop,
In age his equals, to condenſe the files,
To rivet cloſe their bucklers he commands. 220
As ſome broad veſſel, heavy in her ſtrength,
But well-compacted, when a fav'ring gale
Invites the ſkilful maſter to expand
The ſails at large, her ſlow but ſteady courſe
Impels through myriads of dividing waves; 225
So, unreſiſted, through Barbarian throngs
The hoary phalanx paſs'd. Arcadia's ſons
Purſu'd more ſwift. Gigantic Clonius preſs'd
The yielding Perſians, who before him ſunk,
Cruſh'd like vile ſtubble underneath the ſteps 230
Of ſome glad peaſant, viſiting his fields
Of new-ſhorn harveſt. On the gen'ral rout
Phraortes look'd intrepid ſtill. He ſprang
O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe.
His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd. 235

Fly then, ye cowards, and deſert your chief.
Yet ſingle here my target ſhall oppoſe
The ſhock of thouſands. Raging, he impels
His deathful point through Ariſtander's breaſt.
Him Dithyrambus lov'd. A ſacred bard, 240
Rever'd for juſtice, for his verſe renown'd,
He ſung the deeds of heroes, thoſe, who fell,

Or thofe, who conquer'd in their country's caufe,
Th' enraptur'd foul infpiring with the love
Of glory, earn'd by virtue. His high ftrain 245
The mufes favour'd from their neighb'ring bow'rs,
And blefs'd with heav'nly melody his lyre.
No more from Thefpia fhall his feet afcend
The fhady fteep of Helicon; no more
The ftream divine of Aganippe's fount 250
Bedew his lip harmonious: nor his hands,
Which, dying, grafp the unforfaken lance,
And proftrate buckler, ever more accord
His lofty numbers to the founding fhell.
Lo! Dithyrambus weeps. Amid the rage 255
Of war and conqueft fwiftly-gufhing tears
Find one fad moment's interval to fall
On his pale friend. But foon the victor proves
His ftern revenge. Through fhield and corfelet plung'd,
His forceful blade divides the Perfian's cheft; 260
Whence iffue ftreams of royal blood, deriv'd
From anceftors, who fway'd in Ninus old
Th' Affyrian fceptre. He to Xerxes' throne
A tributary fatrap rul'd the vales,
Where Tigris fwift between the parted hills 265
Of tall Niphates drew his foamy tide,
Impregnating the meads. Phraortes finks,
Not inftantly expiring. Still his eyes
Flafh indignation, while the Perfians fly.

BEYOND the Malian entrance of the ftreights 270
Th' Arcadians rufh; when, unperceiv'd, till felt,
Spring from concealment in a thicket deep

New

New ſwarms of warriors, cluſtring on the flank
Of thoſe unwary Grecians. Tow'rds the bay
They ſhrink. They totter on the fearful edge, 275
Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,
The ſtrength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk
Beneath the chieſtain of th' aſſailing band
Falls proſtrate. Theſpians and Platæans wave
Auxiliar enſigns. They encounter foes, 280
Reſembling Greeks in diſcipline and arms.
Dire is the ſhock. What leſs, than Caria's queen
In their career of victory could check
Such warriors? Fierce ſhe ſtruggles; while the rout
Of Medes and Ciſſians carry to the camp 285
Contagious terror; thence no ſuccour flows.
Demophilus ſtands firm; the Carian band
At length recoil before him. Keen purſuit
He leaves to others, like th' almighty ſire,
Who ſits unſhaken on his throne, while floods, 290
His inſtruments of wrath o'erwhelm the earth,
And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth
Of proudeſt cedars. Through the yielding croud
Platæa's chief and Dithyrambus range
Triumphant ſide by ſide. Thus o'er the field, 295
Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,
And concave hoof along his echoing banks,
Two gen'rous courſers, link'd in mutual reins,
In ſpeed, in ardour equal, beat the duſt
To reach the glories of Olympia's goal. 300
Th' intrepid heroes on the plain advance,
They preſs the Carian rear. Not long the queen

Endures

Endures that ſhame. Her people's dying groans
Tranſpierce her boſom. On their bleeding limbs
She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs. 305
A troop ſhe rallies. Goddeſs-like ſhe turns,
Not leſs, than Pallas with her Gorgon ſhield.
Whole ranks ſhe covers like th' imperial bird
Extending o'er a neſt of callow young
Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak, 310
Her claws outſtretch'd. The Theſpian's ardent hand,
From common lives refraining, haſtes to ſnatch
More ſplendid laurels from that nobler head.
His pond'rous falchion, ſwift deſcending, bears
Her buckler down, thence glancing, cuts the thong 315
Which holds her headpiece faſt. That golden fence
Drops down. Thick treſſes, unconfin'd, diſcloſe
A female warrior; one, whoſe ſummer pride
Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,
Yet by th' heroic character ſupply'd, 320
Which grew more awful, as the touch of time
Remov'd the ſoft'ning graces. Back he ſteps,
Unmann'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,
Fire-darting, ſhe advances. Both her hands
Full on his creſt diſcharge the furious blade. 325
The forceful blow compels him to recede
Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd.
His ſoldiers flock around him. From a ſcene
Of blood more diſtant ſpeeds Platæa's chief.
The fair occaſion of ſuſpended fight 330
She ſeizes, bright in glory wheels away,

And

And faves her Carian remnant. While his friend
In fervent founds Diomedon befpake.

If thou art flain, I curfe this glorious day.
Be all thy trophies, be my own accurs'd. 335

The youth, recover'd, anfwers in a fmile.
I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd
The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.
Our longer ftay Demophilus may blame.
Let us prevent his call. This faid, their fteps 340
They turn, both ftriding through empurpled heaps
Of arms, and mangled flain, themfelves with gore
Diftain'd like two grim tigers, who have forc'd
A nightly manfion, on the defert rais'd
By fome lone-wand'ring traveller, then, dy'd 345
In human crimfon, through the foreft deep
Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.

Stern Artemifia, fweeping o'er the field,
Burfts into Afia's camp. A furious look
She cafts around. Abrocomes remote 350
With Hyperanthes from the king were fent.
She fees Argeftes in that quarter chief,
Who from battalions numberlefs had fpar'd
Not one to fuccour, but his malice gorg'd
With her diftrefs. Her anger now augments. 355
Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow
He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he fat
High on his car. She follows. Loft her helm,
Refign'd to fportive winds her clufter'd locks,
Wild, but majeftic like the waving boughs 360
Of fome proud elm, the glory of the grove,
And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd fhield

With

With gore is tarniſh'd. Pale around are ſeen
All faint, all ghaſtly from repeated wounds
Her bleeding ſoldiers. Brandiſhing her ſword, 365
To them ſhe points, to Xerxes thus ſhe ſpeaks.

Behold theſe mangled Carians, who have ſpent
Their vital current in the king's defence,
Ev'n in his ſight; while Medes and Ciſſians fled,
By theſe protected, whom Argeſtes ſaw 370
Purſu'd by ſlaughter to thy very camp,
Yet left unhelp'd to periſh. Ruling ſire,
Let Horomazes be thy name, or Jove;
To thee appealing, of the king I claim
A day for juſtice. Monarch, to my arm 375
Give him a prey. Let Artemiſia's truth
Chaſtiſe his treaſon. With an eye ſubmiſs,
A mien obſequious, and a ſoothing tone
To cheat the king, to moderate her ire
Argeſtes utters theſe fallacious words. 380

May Horomazes leave the fiend at large
To blaſt my earthly happineſs, confine
Amid the horrors of his own abode
My ghoſt hereafter, if the ſacred charge
Of Xerxes' perſon was not my reſtraint, 385
My ſole reſtraint! To him our all is due,
Our all how trifling, with his ſafety weigh'd!
His preſervation I prefer to fame,
And bright occaſion for immortal deeds
Forego in duty. Elſe my helpful ſword 390
Fair heroine of Aſia, hadſt thou ſeen
Among the foremoſt blazing. Lo! the king
A royal preſent will on thee beſtow,

Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,
A golden wreath to each ſurvivor brave. 395

Aw'd by her ſpirit, by the flatt'rers ſpell
Deluded, languid through diſmay and ſhame
At his defeat, the monarch for a time
Sat mute, at length unlock'd his falt'ring lips.

Thou hear'ſt, great princeſs. Reſt content. His words 400
I ratiſy. Yet farther, I proclaim
Thee of my train firſt counſellor and chief.

O eagle-ey'd diſcernment in the king!
O wiſdom equal to his boundleſs power!
The purpled ſycophant exclaims. Thou ſeeſt 405
Her matchleſs talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,
The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments,
Foil'd in her abſence, in her conduct ſafe.
Thy penetrating ſight directs the field;
There let her worth be hazarded no more. 410

Thy words are wiſe, the blinded prince rejoins.
Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.

Thus to remove her from the royal ear
Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage
Swells in her boſom. Demaratus ſees 415
And calms the ſtorm by rend'ring up his charge
To her maternal hand. Her ſon belov'd
Diſpels the furies. Then the Spartan thus.

O Artemisia, of the king's command
Be thou obſervant. To thy ſlaughter'd friends 420
Immediate care, far other, than revenge,
Is due. The ravens gather. From his neſt
Among thoſe clifts the eagle's rapid flight

Denotes

Denotes his ſcent of carnage. Thou, a Greek,
Well know'ſt the duty ſacred to the dead. 425
Depart; thy guide is piety. Collect,
For honourable ſepulchres prepare
Thoſe bodies, mark'd with honourable wounds.
I will aſſiſt thee. Xerxes will entruſt
To my command a choſen guard of horſe. 430

As oft, when ſtorms in ſummer have o'ercaſt
The night with double darkneſs, only pierc'd
By heav'n's blue fire, while thunder ſhakes the pole,
The orient ſun, diffuſing genial warmth,
Refines the troubled air; the blaſt is mute; 435
Death-pointed flames diſperſe; and placid Jove
Looks down in ſmiles; ſo prudence from the lips
Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,
His aſpect ſtrength'ning ſmooth perſuaſion's flow,
Compos'd her ſpirit. She with him departs. 440
The king aſſigns a thouſand horſe to guard
Th' illuſtrious exile, and heroic dame.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK,

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Grecian commanders, after the purſuit, retire for refreſhment to a cave in the ſide of Mount Oeta. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave; while Dithyrambus, diſcovering a paſſage through it, aſcends to the Temple of the Muſes. After a long diſcourſe with Meliſſa, the daughter of Oileus, ſhe entruſts him with a ſolemn meſſage to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deputes this charge to Megiſtias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces, firſt engag'd, ſends down a freſh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted, on their own requeſt, to continue in the field with the Platæans. By the advice of Diomedon, the Grecians advance to the broadeſt part of Thermopylæ, where they form a line of twenty in depth, conſiſting of the Platæans, Mantineans, Tegæans, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliaſians and Mycenæans. The Spartans compoſe a ſecond line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light arm'd troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locrians under Medon, the ſon of Oileus. Dieneces commands the whole.

NOW Dithyrambus and Platæa's chief,
Their former poſt attaining, had rejoin'd
Demophilus. Recumbent on his ſhield
Phraortes, gaſping there, attracts their ſight.
To him in pity Theſpia's gallant youth 5
Approaching, thus his gen'rous ſoul expreſs'd.

LIV'ST thou, brave Perſian? By propitious Jove,
From whom the pleaſing ſtream of mercy flows
Through mortal boſoms, leſs my ſoul rejoic'd,
When fortune bleſs'd with victory my arm, 10
Than now to raiſe thee from this field of death.

HIS languid eyes the dying prince unclos'd,
Then with expiring voice. Vain man, forbear
To proffer me, what ſoon thyſelf muſt crave.
The day is quite extinguiſh'd in theſe orbs. 15
One moment fate allows me to diſdain
Thy mercy, Grecian. Now I yield to death.

THIS effort made, the haughty ſpirit fled.
So ſhoots a meteor's tranſitory gleam
Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds 20
Then diſſipates for ever. O'er the corſe
His rev'rend face Demophilus inclin'd,
Pois'd on his lance, and thus addreſs'd the ſlain.

ALAS! how glorious were that bleeding breaſt,
Had juſtice brac'd the buckler on thy arm, 25
And to preſerve a people bade thee die.
Who now ſhall mourn thee! Thy ungrateful king
Will ſoon forget thy worth. Thy native land
May raiſe an empty monument, but feel
No public ſorrow. Thy recorded name 30

Shall

Shall wake among thy countrymen no ſighs
For their loſt hero. What to them avail'd
Thy might, thy dauntleſs ſpirit? Not to guard
Their wives, their offspring from th' oppreſſor's hand;
But to extend oppreſſion didſt thou fall, 35
Perhaps with inborn virtues in thy ſoul,
Which, but thy froward deſtiny forbade,
By freedom cheriſh'd, might have bleſs'd mankind.
All-bounteous nature, thy impartial laws
To no ſelected race of man confine 40
The ſenſe of glory, fortitude, and all
The nobler paſſions, which exalt the mind,
And render life illuſtrious. Theſe thou plant'ſt
In ev'ry ſoil. But freedom, like the ſun,
Muſt warm the gen'rous ſeeds. By her alone 45
They bloom, they flouriſh; while oppreſſion blaſts
The tender virtues; hence a ſpurious growth,
Falſe honour, ſavage valour taint the ſoul,
And wild ambition; hence rapacious pow'r
The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave, 50
A feaſt for dogs, the enſanguin'd field beſtrew.

He ſaid. Around the venerable man
The warriors throng'd attentive. Conqueſt huſh'd
Its joyful tranſports. O'er the horrid field,
Rude ſcene ſo late of tumult, all was calm. 55
So, when the ſong of Thracian Orpheus drew
To Hebrus' margin from their dreary ſeats
The ſavage breed, which Hæmus, wrapp'd in clouds,
Pangæus cold, and Rhodopean ſnows

In blood and difcord nurs'd, the foothing ftrain 60
Flow'd with enchantment through the ravifh'd ear,
Their fiercenefs melted, and, amaz'd, they learn'd
The facred laws of juftice, which the bard
Mix'd with the mufic of his heav'nly ftring.

MEAN time th' Arcadians with inverted arms 65
And banners, fad and folemn on their fhields
The giant limbs of Clonius bore along
To fpread a gen'ral woe. The noble corfe,
Dire fpectacle of carnage, paffing by
To thofe laft honours, which the dead partake 70
Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye
Review'd Phraortes on the rock fupine;
Then on the fage Demophilus he look'd
Intent, and fpake. My heart retains thy words.
This hour may witnefs, how rapacious pow'r 75
The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more.
But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire
A fignal tomb. This gallant Perfian, crufh'd
Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood ftill warm,
May lie forgotten by his thanklefs king; 80
Yet not by me neglected fhall remain
A naked corfe. The good old man replies.

MY gen'rous child, deferving that fuccefs,
Thy arm hath gain'd! When vital breath is fled,
Our friends, our foes are equal duft. Both claim 85
The fun'ral paffage to that future feat
Of being, where no enmity revives.
There Greek and Perfian will together quaff
In amaranthine bow'rs the cup of blifs

Immortal.

Immortal. Him, thy valour flew on earth, 90
In that blefs'd region thou mayft find a friend.

THIS faid, the ready Thefpians he commands
To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,
Th' empurpled rock. Outftretch'd on targets broad,
Suftain'd by hands late hoftile, now humane, 95
He follows Clonius to the fun'ral pyre.

A CAVE not diftant from the Phocian wall
Through Œta's cloven fide had nature form'd
In fpacious windings. This in mofs fhe clad;
O'er half the entrance downward from the roots 100
She hung the fhaggy trunks of branching firs,
To heav'n's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth
Relucent laurels fpread before the fun
A broad and vivid foliage. High above,
The hill was darken'd by a folemn fhade, 105
Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave
Diomedon, Demophilus refort,
And Thefpia's youth. A deep recefs appears,
Cool, as the azure grot, where Thetis fleeps
Beneath the vaulted occean. Whifper'd founds 110
Of waters, trilling from the riven ftone
To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,
In pureft ftreams o'erflowing to the fea,
Allure the warriors, hot with toil and thirft,
To this retreat ferene. Againft the fides 115
Their difencumber'd hands repofe their fhields;
The helms they loofen from their glowing cheeks;
Propp'd on their fpears, they reft: when Agis brings
From Lacedæmon's leader thefe commands.

LEONIDAS recals you from your toils, 120
Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd
The firſt bright harveſt on the field of fame.
Our eyes in wonder from the Phocian wall
On your unequall'd deeds inceſſant gaz'd.

To whom Platæa's chief. Go, Agis, ſay 125
To Lacedæmon's ruler, that, untir'd,
Diomedon can yet exalt his ſpear,
Nor feels the armour heavy on his limbs.
Then ſhall I quit the conteſt? Ere he ſinks,
Shall not this early ſun again behold 130
The ſlaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,
Should they adventure on a freſh aſſault?

To him the Theſpian youth. My friend, my guide
To noble actions, ſince thy gen'rous heart
Intent on fame diſdains to reſt, O grant, 135
I too thy glorious labours may partake,
May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.
Thou, gentleſt Agis, Sparta's king entreat
Not to command us from the field of war.

YES, perſevering heroes, he reply'd, 140
I will return, will Sparta's king entreat
Not to command you from the field of war.

THEN interpos'd Demophilus. O friend,
Who leadſt to conqueſt brave Platæa's ſons;
Thou too, lov'd offspring of the deareſt man, 145
Who doſt reſtore a brother to my eyes;
My ſoul your magnanimity applauds:
But, O reflect, that unabating toil
Subdues the mightieſt. Valour will repine,

When

When the weak hand obeys the heart no more. 150
Yet I, declining through the weight of years,
Will not aſſign a meaſure to your ſtrength.
If ſtill you find your vigour undecay'd,
Stay and augment your glory. So, when time
Caſts from your whiten'd heads the helm aſide; 155
When in the temples your enfeebled arms
Have hung their conſecrated ſhields, the land,
Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,
Shall then by honours, doubled on your age,
Requite the gen'rous labours of your prime. 160

So ſpake the ſenior, and forſook the cave.
But from the fount Diomedon receives
Th' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,
Addreſſing thus the genius of the ſtream.

Whoe'er thou art, divinity unſtain'd 165
Of this fair fountain, till unſparing Mars
Heap'd carnage round thee, bounteous are thy ſtreams
To me, who ill repay thee. I again
Thy ſilver-gleaming current muſt pollute,
Which, mix'd with gore, ſhall tinge the Malian ſlime. 170

He ſaid, and lifted in his brimming caſque
The bright, refreſhing moiſture. Thus repairs
The ſpotted panther to Hydaſpes' ſide,
Or eaſtern Indus, feaſted on the blood
Of ſome torn deer, which nigh his cruel graſp 175
Had roam'd, unheeding, in the ſecret ſhade;
Rapacious o'er the humid brink he ſtoops,

And in the pure and fluid chryſtal cools
His reeking jaws. Mean time the Theſpian's eye
Roves round the vaulted ſpace; when ſudden ſounds 180
Of muſic, utter'd by melodious harps,
And melting voices, diſtant, but in tones
By diſtance ſoften'd, while the echoes ſigh'd
In lulling replication, fill the vault
With harmony. In admiration mute, 185
With nerves unbrac'd by rapture, he, entranc'd,
Stands like an eagle, when his parting plumes
The balm of ſleep relaxes, and his wings
Fall from his languid ſide. Platæa's chief,
Obſerving, rous'd the warrior. Son of Mars, 190
Shall muſic's ſoftneſs from thy boſom ſteal
The ſenſe of glory? From his neighb'ring camp
Perhaps the Perſian ſends freſh nations down.
Soon in bright ſteel Thermopylæ will blaze.
Awake. Accuſtom'd to the clang of arms, 195
Intent on vengeance for invaded Greece,
My ear, my ſpirit in this hour admit
No new ſenſation, nor a change of thought.

THE Theſpian, ſtarting from oblivious ſloth
Of raviſhment and wonder, quick reply'd. 200

THESE ſounds were more than human. Hark! Again!
O honour'd friend, no adverſe banner ſtreams
In ſight. No ſhout proclaims the Perſian freed
From his late terror. Deeper let us plunge
In this myſterious dwelling of the nymphs, 205

Whoſe

Whoſe voices charm its gloom. In ſmiles rejoin'd
Diomedon. I ſee thy ſoul enthrall'd.
Me thou wouldſt rank among th' unletter'd rout
Of yon Barbarians, ſhould I preſs thy ſtay.
Time favours too. Till Agis be return'd, 210
We cannot act. Indulge thy eager ſearch.
Here will I wait, a centinel unmov'd,
To watch thy coming. In exploring haſte
Th' impatient Theſpian penetrates the cave.
He finds it bounded by a ſteep aſcent 215
Of rugged ſteps; where down the hollow rock
A modulation clear, diſtinct and flow
In movement ſolemn from a lyric ſtring,
Diſſolves the ſtagnant air to ſweet accord
With theſe ſonorous lays. Celeſtial maids! 220
While, from our cliffs contemplating thewar,
We celebrate our heroes. O impart
Orphëan magic to the pious ſtrain!
That from the mountain we may call the groves,
Swift motion through theſe marble fragments breathe 225
To overleap the high Œtæan ridge,
And cruſh the fell invaders of our peace.

The animated hero upward ſprings
Light, as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd
In ſubterranean cavities, at length 230
Pervading, rives the ſurface to enlarge
The long-impriſon'd flame. Aſcending ſoon,
He ſees, he ſtands abaſh'd, then rev'rent kneels.

An aged temple with insculptur'd forms
Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train 235
Of nine bright virgins, round their priestess rang'd,
Who stood in awful majesty, receive
His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.
The measur'd movement on the lyric chord
In faint vibration dies. The priestess sage, 240
Whose elevated port and aspect rose
To more than mortal dignity, her lyre
Consigning graceful to attendant hands,
Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair
Shades his inclining forehead; while a flush 245
Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.
Her pensive visage softens to a smile
On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts.

I should reprove thee, inadvertent youth,
Who through the sole access, by nature left 250
To this pure mansion, with intruding steps
Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword
Perhaps embellish'd that triumphant scene,
Which wak'd these harps to celebrating notes.
What is the impress on thy warlike shield? 255

A golden eagle on my shield I bear,
Still bending low, he answers. She pursues.

Art thou possessor of that glorious orb,
By me distinguish'd in the late defeat
Of Asia, driv'n before thee? Speak thy name. 260
Who is thy sire? Where lies thy native seat?
Com'st thou for glory to this fatal spot,
Or from Barbarian violence to guard

A pa-

A parent's age, a ſpouſe, and tender babes,
Who call thee father? Humbly he again. 265

I AM of Theſpia, Dithyrambus nam'd,
The ſon of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,
He to his brother, and my ſecond ſire,
Demophilus, conſign'd me. Theſpia's ſons
By him are led. His dictates I obey, 270
Him to reſemble ſtrive. No infant voice
Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow
I am a ſtranger, and among the Greeks
The leaſt entitled to thy partial praiſe.

NONE more entitled, interpos'd the dame. 275
Deſerving hero! thy demeanour ſpeaks,
It juſtifies the fame, ſo widely ſpread,
Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride
Of that fair city, which the Muſes love,
Thee an accepted viſitant I hail 280
In this their ancient temple. Thou ſhalt view
Their ſacred haunts. Deſcending from the dome,
She thus purſues. Firſt know, my youthful hours
Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's Muſe
To daily meditation won my ſoul, 285
With my young ſpirit mix'd undying ſparks
Of her own rapture. By a father ſage
Conducted, cities, manners, men I ſaw,
Their inſtitutes and cuſtoms. I return'd.
The voice of Locris call'd me to ſuſtain 290
The holy function here. Now throw thy ſight
Acroſs that meadow, whoſe enliven'd blades
Wave in the breeze, and gliſten in the ſun

Behind

Behind the hoary ſane. My bleating train
Are nouriſh'd there, a ſpot of plenty, ſpar'd 295
From this ſurrounding wilderneſs. Remark
That fluid mirror, edg'd by ſhrubs and flow'rs,
Shrubs of my culture, flow'rs, by Iris dreſs'd.
Nor paſs that ſmiling concave in the hill,
Whoſe pointed crags are ſoften'd to the ſight 300
By figs and grapes. She pauſes; while around
His eye, delighted, roves, in more delight
Soon to the ſpot returning, where ſhe ſtood
A deity in ſemblance, o'er the place
Preſiding awful, as Minerva wiſe, 305
Auguſt like Juno, like Diana pure,
But not more pure, than fair. The beauteous lake,
The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,
The multifarious glow on Flora's lap
Loſe all attraction, as her gracious lips 310
Reſume their tale. In ſolitude remote
Here I have dwelt contemplative, ſerene.
Oft through the rocks reſponſive to my lyre,
Oft to th' Amphyctyons in aſſembly full,
When at this ſhrine their annual vows they pay, 315
In meaſur'd declamation I repeat
The praiſe of Greece, her liberty and laws.
From me the hinds, who tend their wand'ring goats
In theſe rude purlieus, modulate their pipes
To ſmoother cadence. Juſtice from my tongue 320
Diſſentions calms, which ev'n in deſerts rend
Th' unquiet heart of man. Now furious war
My careful thoughts engages, which delight

To help the free, th' oppreſſor to confound.
Thy feet auſpicious fortune hither brings. 325
In thee a noble meſſenger I find.
Go, in theſe words Leonidas addreſs.
"Meliſſa, prieſteſs of the tuneful nine,
"By their beheſts invites thy honour'd feet
"To her divine abode. Thee, firſt of Greeks, 330
"To conference of high import ſhe calls."

Th' obedient Theſpian down the holy cave
Returns. His ſwiftneſs ſuddenly prevents
His friend's impatience, who ſalutes him thus.

LET thy adventure be hereafter told. 335
Look yonder. Freſh battalions from the camp
File through the Phocian barrier to conſtruct
Another phalanx, moving tow'r of war,
Which ſcorns the ſtrength of Aſia. Let us arm;
That, ready ſtation'd in the glorious van, 340
We may ſecure permiſſion from the king
There to continue, and renew the fight.

THAT inſtant brings Megiſtias near the grot.
To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand
Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard 345
By Dithyrambus in their ſlow approach,
The father warns a young and lib'ral mind.

SPRUNG from a diſtant boundary of Greece,
A foreigner in Sparta, cheriſh'd there,
Inſtructed, honour'd, nor unworthy held 350
To fight for Lacedæmon in her line
Of diſcipline and valour, lo! my ſon,
The hour is come to prove thy gen'rous heart,
That in thy hand not ill-entruſted, ſhine

The ſpear and buckler to maintain the cauſe 355
Of thy protectreſs. Let thy mind recal
Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,
He overlooks the battle ; he diſcerns
The bold and fearful. May the gods, I ſerve,
Grant me to hear Leonidas approve 360
My ſon! No other boon my age implores.

The augur paus'd. The animated cheek
Of Menalippus glows. His eager look
Demands the fight. This ſtruck the tender ſire,
Who then with moiſten'd eyes. Remember too 365
A father ſees thy danger. O! my child,
To me thy honour, as to thee, is dear ;
Yet court not death. By ev'ry filial tie,
By all my fondneſs, all my cares I ſue!
Amid' the conflict, or the warm purſuit 370
Still by the wiſe Dieneces abide.
His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths
Of glory. He admits thee to his ſide.
He will direct thy ardour. Go——They part.

Megistias, turning, is accoſted thus 375
By Dithyrambus. Venerable ſeer,
So may that ſon, whoſe merit I eſteem,
Whoſe precious head in peril I would die
To guard, return in triumph to thy breaſt,
As thou deliver'ſt to Laconia's king 380
A high and ſolemn meſſage. While anew
The line is forming, from th' embattled field
I muſt not ſtray, uncall'd. A ſacred charge
Through hallow'd lips will beſt approach the king.

The

THE Acarnanian in ſuſpence remains 385
And ſilence. Dithyrambus quick relates
Meliſſa's words, deſcribes the holy grot,
Then quits th' inſtructed augur, and attends
Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief
Was re-aſſuming his diſtinguiſh'd arms, 390
Which, as a ſplendid recompence he bore
From grateful Athens, for achievements bold;
When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd
Her domes from Aſian flames. The ſculptur'd helm
Inclos'd his manly temples. From on high 395
A four-fold plumage nodded; while beneath
A golden dragon with effulgent ſcales,
Itſelf the creſt, ſhot terror. On his arm
He brac'd his buckler. Bord'ring on the rim,
Gorgonian ſerpents twin'd. Within, the form 400
Of Pallas, martial goddeſs, was emboſs'd.
Low, as her feet, the graceful tunic flow'd.
Betwixt two gryffins on her helmet ſat
A ſphynx with wings expanded; while the face
Of dire Meduſa on her breaſt-plate frown'd. 405
One hand ſupports a javelin, which confounds
The pride of kings. The other leads along
A blooming virgin, Victory, whoſe brow
A wreath encircles. Laurels ſhe preſents;
But from her ſhoulders all her plumes were
ſhorn, 410
In favour'd Athens ever now to reſt.
This dread of Aſia on his mighty arm
Diomedon uprear'd. He ſnatch'd his lance,
Then ſpake to Dithyrambus. See, my friend,

Alone of all the Grecians who sustain'd 415
The former onset, inexhausted stand
Platæa's sons. They well may keep the field,
Who with unslacken'd nerves endur'd that day,
Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n
Back to their ships, and Athens left secure. 420
Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank
Thy valour shall be plac'd to share command,
And ev'ry honour with Platæa's chief.

He said no more, but tow'rds the Grecian van
Impetuous, ardent strode. Nor slow behind 425
The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd
Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms;
When lightly graceful with his feather'd feet
Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd
To aid th' incens'd divinities of Greece 430
Against the Phrygian tow'rs. Their eager haste
Soon brings the heroes to th' embattling ranks,
Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts.

Not to contend, but vanquish are ye come.
Here in the blood of fugitives your spears 435
Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,
But chief, ye men of Sparta, view that space,
Where from the Malian gulph more distant rise
Th' Œtæan rocks, and less confine the streights.
There if we range, extending wide our front, 440
An ampler scope to havock will be giv'n.

To him Dieneces. Platæan friend,
Well dost thou counsel. On that widening ground
Close to the mountain place thy vet'ran files.
Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall stretch 445
Quite

Quite to the ſhore in phalanx deep like thine.
The Spartans wedg'd in this contracted part
Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits
With lighter bodies. Further back the line
Of Locris forms a ſtrong reſerve. He ſaid. 450
The diff'rent bands, confiding in his ſkill,
Move on ſucceſſive. The Platæans firſt
Againſt the hill are ſtation'd. In their van
Is Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy
Diſtends their boſoms, ſparkles in their eyes. 455

Bless'd be the great Diomedon, they ſhout,
Who brings another hero to our line.
Hail! Dithyrambus. Hail! illuſtrious youth.
Had tender age permitted, thou hadſt gain'd
An early palm at Marathon. His poſt 460
He takes. His gladneſs bluſhes on his cheek
Amid the foremoſt rank. Around him croud
The long-try'd warriors. Their unnumber'd ſcars
Diſcov'ring, they in ample phraſe recount
Their various dangers. He their wounds ſurveys 465
In veneration, nor diſdains to hear
The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king
Return'd, the gracious Agis theſe addreſs'd.

Leonidas ſalutes Platæa's chief
And Dithyrambus. To your ſwords he grants 470
A further effort with Platæa's band,
If yet by toil unconquer'd——but I ſee,
That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.
Hail! glorious veterans. This ſignal day
May your victorious arms augment the wreaths 475
Around

Around your venerable heads, and grace
Thermopylæ with Marathonian fame.

This said, he hastens back. Mean time advance
The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,
Then Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief, 480
Who near Diomedon in equal range
Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form.
Alcmæon, bold Eupalamus succeed
With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.
Last on the Malian shore Mycenæs youth 485
Aristobulus draws. From Œta's side
Down to the bay in well-connected length
Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears,
While twenty bucklers ev'ry file condense.
A sure support, Dieneces behind 490
Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,
There Menalippus by their leader stand
Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,
The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame
Of expectation through his light-arm'd force; 495
While Polydorus present in his thoughts
To vengeance sharpens his indignant soul.

No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.
This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.
The solemn scene on Œta to his friend 500
He open'd large; portray'd Melissa's form,
Reveal'd her mandate; when Platæa's chief.

Such elevation of a female mind
Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain
The conference, she asks. This wond'rous dame 505
Amid her hymns conceives some lofty thought

To

To make theſe ſlaves, who loiter in their camp,
Dread ev'n our women. But, my gentle friend,
Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid ſpell
Of ſong enchants, ſhould I reproach the gods, 510
Who form'd me cold to muſic's pleaſing pow'r?
Or ſhould I thank them, that the ſoft'ning charm
Of ſound, or numbers ne'er diſſolv'd my ſoul?
Yet I confeſs, thy valour breaks that charm,
Which may enrapture, not unman thy breaſt. 515

To whom his friend. Doth he, whoſe lays record
The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,
Doth he diſſolve thy ſpirit? Yet he flows
In all the ſweetneſs, harmony can breathe.

No, by the gods, Diomedon rejoins. 520
I feel that mighty muſe. I ſee the car
Of fierce Achilles, ſee th' encumber'd wheels
O'er heroes driv'n, and clotted with their gore.
Another too demands my ſoul's eſteem,
Brave Æſchylus of Athens. I have ſeen 525
His muſe begirt by Furies, while ſhe ſwell'd
Her tragic numbers. Him in equal rage
His country's foes o'erwhelming I beheld
At Marathon. If Phœbus would diffuſe
Such fire through ev'ry bard, the tuneful band 530
Might in themſelves find heroes for their ſongs.
But, ſon of Harmatides, lift thine eye
To yonder point, remoteſt in the bay.
Thoſe ſeeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet
Succeſſive round the jutting land, are ſails. 535
Th' Athenian pendant haſtens to ſalute

Leonidas.

Leonidas. O Æſchylus, my friend,
Firſt in the train of Phœbus, and of Mars,
Be thou on board! Swift-bounding o'er the waves,
Come and be witneſs to heroic deeds! 540
Brace thy ſtrong harp with loftier-ſounding chords
To celebrate this battle! Fall, who may;
But if they fall with honour, let their names
Round feſtive goblets in thy numbers ring,
And joy, not grief, accompany the ſong. 545

CONVERSING thus, their courage they beguil'd,
Which elſe, impatient of inactive hours,
At long-ſuſpended glory had repin'd.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

A

POEM.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

By RICHARD GLOVER, Eſq;

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LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Megiſtias delivers Meliſſa's meſſage to Leonidas. Medon, her brother, conducts him to the temple. She furniſhes Leonidas with the means of executing a deſign he had premeditated to annoy the enemy. They are joined by a body of mariners under the command of Æſchylus, a celebrated poet and warrior among the Athenians. Leonidas takes the neceſſary meaſures; and, obſerving from a ſummit of Oeta the motions of the Perſian army, expects another attack: this is renewed with great violence by Hyperanthes, Abrocomes, and the principal Perſian leaders, at the head of ſome choſen troops.

MEGISTIAS, urging to unwonted ſpeed
His aged ſteps, by Dithyrambus charg'd
With ſage Meliſſa's words, had now rejoin'd
The king of Lacedæmon. At his ſide
Was Maron poſted, watchful to receive 5
His high injunctions. In the rear they ſtood
Behind two thouſand Locrians, deep-array'd
By warlike Medon, from Oïleus ſprung.
Leonidas to them his anxious mind
Was thus diſcloſing. Medon, Maron, hear. 10

From this low rampart my exploring eye
But half commands the action, yet hath mark'd
Enough for caution. Yon barbarian camp,
Immenfe, exhauftlefs, deluging the ground
With myriads, ftill o'erflowing, may confume 15
By endlefs numbers, and unceafing toil
The Grecian ftrength. Not marble is our flefh,
Nor adamant our finews. Sylvan pow'rs,
Who dwell on Oeta, your fuperior aid
We muft folicit. Your ftupendous cliffs 20
In thofe loofe rocks and branchlefs trunks contain
More fell annoyance, than the arm of man.

He ended; when Megiftias. Virtuous king,
Meliffa, prieftefs of the tuneful nine,
By their behefts invites thy honour'd feet 25
To her chafte dwelling, feated on that hill.
To conference of high import fhe calls
Thee, firft of Grecians. Medon interpos'd.

She is my fifter. Juftice rules her ways
With piety and wifdom. To her voice 30
The nations round give ear. The mufes breathe
Their infpiration through her fpotlefs foul,
Which borders on divinity. She calls
On thee. O truly ftyl'd the firft of Greeks,
Regard her call Yon cliff's projecting head 35
To thy difcernment will afford a fcope
More full, more certain; thence thy fkilful eye
Will beft direct the fight. Meliffa's fire
Was ever prefent to the king in thought,
Who thus to Medon. Lead, Oïleus' fon. 40

Before

Before the daughter of Oïleus place
My willing feet. They haſten to the cave.
Megiſtias, Maron follow. Through the rock
Leonidas, aſcending to the fane,
Roſe like the god of morning from the cell 45
Of night, when, ſhedding cheerfulneſs and day
On hill and vale emblaz'd with dewy gems,
He gladdens nature. Lacedæmon's king,
Majeſtically graceful and ſerene,
Diſpels the rigour in that ſolemn ſeat 50
Of holy ſequeſtration. On the face
Of penſive-ey'd religion rapture glows
In admiration of the god-like man.
Advanc'd Meliſſa. He her proffer'd hand
In hue, in purity like ſnow, receiv'd. 55
A heav'n-illumin'd dignity of look
On him ſhe fix'd. Rever'd by all, ſhe ſpake.
  Hail! chief of men, ſelected by the gods
For purer fame than Hercules acquir'd.
This hour allows no pauſe. She leads the king 60
With Medon, Maron, and Megiſtias down
A ſlope, declining to the moſſy verge,
Which terminates the mountain. While they paſs,
She thus proceeds. Theſe marble maſſes view,
Which lie diſpers'd around you. They were hewn 65
From yonder quarry. Note thoſe pond'rous beams,
The ſylvan offspring of that hill. With theſe
At my requeſt th'Amphictyons from their ſeat
Of gen'ral council piouſly decreed
To raiſe a dome, the ornament of Greece. 70

Obſerve thoſe wither'd firs, thoſe mould'ring oaks,
Down that declivity, half-rooted, bent,
Inviting human force—Then look below.
There lies Thermopylæ. I ſee, exclaims
The high-conceiving hero. I recal 75
Thy father's words and forecaſt. He preſag'd,
I ſhould not find his daughter's counſel vain.
He to accompliſh, what thy wiſdom plans,
Hath ampleſt means ſupply'd. Go, Medon, bring
The thouſand peaſants from th' Oïlean vale 80
Detach'd. Their leader Melibœus bring.
Fly, Maron. Ev'ry inſtrument provide
To fell the trees, to drag the maſſy beams,
To lift the broad-hewn fragments. Are not theſe
For ſacred uſe reſerv'd? Megiſtias ſaid. 85
Can theſe be wielded by the hand of Mars
Without pollution? In a ſolemn tone
The prieſteſs anſwer'd. Rev'rend man, who bear'ſt
Pontific wreaths, and thou, great captain, hear.
Forbear to think, that my unprompted mind, 90
Calm and ſequeſter'd in religion's peace,
Could have devis'd a ſtratagem of war;
Or, unpermitted, could reſign to Mars
Theſe rich materials, gather'd to reſtore
In ſtrength and ſplendour yon decrepid walls, 95
And that time-ſhaken-roof Rejecting ſleep,
Laſt night I lay, contriving ſwift revenge
On theſe Barbarians, whoſe career profane
O'erturns the Grecian temples, and devotes
Their holy bow'rs to flames. I left my couch, 100

Long

Long ere the ſun his orient gates unbarr'd.
Beneath yon beach my penſive head reclin'd.
The rivulets, the fountains, warbling round,
Attracted ſlumber. In a dream I ſaw
Calliopé. Her ſiſters, all with harps, 105
Were rang'd around her; as their Parian forms
Shew in the temple. Doſt thou ſleep? ſhe ſaid;
Meliſſa, doſt thou ſleep? The barb'rous hoſt
Approaches Greece. The firſt of Grecians comes
By death to vanquiſh. Prieſteſs, let him hurl 110
Theſe marble heaps, theſe conſecrated beams,
Our fane itſelf, to cruſh the impious ranks.
The hero ſummon to our ſacred hill.
Reveal the promis'd ſuccour. All is due
To liberty againſt a tyrant's pride. 115
She ſtruck her ſhell. In concert full reply'd
The ſiſter lyres. Leonidas they ſung
In ev'ry note and dialect yet known,
In meaſures new, in language yet to come.

SHE finiſh'd. Then Megiſtias. Dear to heav'n, 120
By nation's honor'd, and in tow'ring thought
O'er either ſex pre-eminent, thy words
To me, a ſoldier and a prieſt, ſuffice.
I heſitate no longer. But the king,
Wrapt in ecſtatic contemplation ſtood, 125
Revolving deep an anſwer, which might ſuit
His dignity and hers. At length he ſpake.

NOT Lacedæmon's whole collected ſtate
Of ſenate, people, ephori and kings,
Not the Amphictyons, whoſe convention holds 130
The

The univerſal majeſty of Greece,
Ere drew ſuch rev'rence; as thy ſingle form,
O all-ſurpaſſing woman, worthy child
Of time-renown'd Oïleus. In thy voice
I hear the goddeſs Liberty. I ſee 135
In thy ſublimity of look and port
That daughter bright of Eleutherian Jove.
Me thou haſt prais'd. My conſcious ſpirit feels,
That not to triumph in thy virtuous praiſe
Were want of virtue. Yet, illuſtrious dame, 140
Were I aſſur'd, that oracles delude;
That, unavailing, I ſhould ſpill my blood;
That all the Muſes of ſubjected Greece
Hereafter would be ſilent, and my name
Be ne'er tranſmitted to recording time; 145
There is in virtue for her ſake alone,
What ſhould uphold my reſolution firm.
My country's laws I never would ſurvive

Mov'd at his words, reflecting on his fate,
She had relax'd her dignity of mind, 150
Had ſunk in ſadneſs; but her brother's helm
Before her beams. Reluming her night,
He through the cave like Heſperus aſcends,
Th' Oïlean hinds conducting to achieve
The enterpriſe, ſhe counſels. Now her ear 155
Is pierc'd by notes, ſhrill ſounding from the vault.
Up ſtarts a diff'rent band, alert and light,
Athenian ſailors. Long and ſep'rate files
Of luſty ſhoulders, eas'd by union, bear
Thick, well-compacted cables, wont to heave 160

The reſtiff anchor. To a naval pipe,
As if one ſoul invigorated all,
And all compos'd one body, they had trod
In equal paces, mazy, yet unbroke
Throughout their paſſage. So the ſpinal ſtrength 165
Of ſome portentous ſerpent, whom the heats
Of Libya breed, indiſſolubly knit,
But flexible, a-croſs the ſandy plain,
Or up the mountain draws his ſpotted length,
Or where a winding excavation leads 170
Through rocks abrupt and wild. Of ſtature large,
In arms, which ſhew'd ſimplicity of ſtrength,
No decoration of redundant art,
With ſable horſe-hair, floating down his back,
A warrior moves behind. Compos'd in gait, 175
Auſterely grave and thoughtful, on his ſhield
The democratic majeſty he bore
Of Athens. Carv'd in emblematic braſs,
Her image ſtood with Pallas by her ſide,
And trampled under each victorious foot 180
A regal crown, one Perſian, one uſurp'd
By her own tyrants, on the well-fought plain
Of Marathon confounded. He commands
Theſe future guardians of their country's weal,
Of gen'ral Greece the bulwarks. Their high deeds 185
From Artemiſium, from th' empurpled ſhores
Of Salamis renown ſhall echo wide;
Shall tell poſterity in lateſt times,
That naval fortitude controls the world.
Swift Maron, following, brings a vig'rous band 190

Of

Of Helots. Ev'ry inſtrument they wield
To delve, to hew, to heave; and active laſt
Bounds Melibœus, vigilant to urge
The tardy forward. To Laconia's king
Advanc'd th' Athenian leader, and began. 195
  THOU godlike ruler of Eurotas, hail!
Thee by my voice Themiſtocles ſalutes,
The admiral of Athens. I conduct
By public choice the ſquadron of my tribe,
And Æſchylus am call'd. Our chief hath giv'n 200
Three days to glory on Eubœa's coaſt,
Whoſe promontories almoſt riſe to meet
Thy ken from Oeta's cliffs. This morning ſaw
The worſted foe, from Artemiſium driv'n,
Leave their diſabled ſhips, and floating wrecks 205
For Grecian trophies. When the fight was clos'd,
I was detach'd to bring th' auſpicious news,
To bid thee welcome. Fortunate my keel
Hath ſwiftly borne me. Joyful I concur
In thy attempt. Appris'd by yonder chiefs, 210
Who met me landing, inſtant from the ſhips
A thouſand gallant mariners I drew,
Who till the ſetting ſun ſhall lend their toil.
  THEMISTOCLES and thou accept my heart,
Leonidas reply'd, and cloſely ſtrain'd 215
The brave, the learn'd Athenian to his breaſt.
To envy is ignoble, to admire
Th' activity of Athens will become
A king of Sparta, who like thee condemn'd
His country's ſloth. But Sparta now is arm'd. 220

Thou

Thou ſhalt commend. Behold me ſtation'd here
To watch the wild viciſſitudes of war,
Direct the courſe of ſlaughter. To this poſt
By that ſuperior woman I was call'd.
By long protracted fight, leſt fainting Greece 225
Should yield, outnumber'd, my enlighten'd ſoul
Through her, whom heav'n enlightens, hath deviſ'd
To whelm the num'rous perſevering foe
In hideous death, and ſignalize the day
With horrors new to war. The Muſes prompt 230
The bright atchievement. Lo! from Athens ſmiles
Minerva too. Her ſwift, auſpicious aid
In thee we find, and theſe, an ancient race,
By her and Neptune cheriſh'd. Straight he meets
The gallant train, majeſtic with his arms 235
Outſtretch'd, in this applauding ſtrain he ſpake.

O LIB'RAL people, earlieſt arm'd to ſhield
Not your own Athens more, than gen'ral Greece,
You beſt deſerve her gratitude. Her praiſe
Will rank you foremoſt on the rolls of fame. 240

THEY hear, they gaze, revering and rever'd.
Freſh numbers muſter, ruſhing from the hills,
The thickets round. Meliſſa, pointing, ſpake.

I AM their leader. Natives of the hills
Are theſe, the rural worſhippers of Pan, 245
Who breathe an ardour through their humble minds
To join you warriors. Vaſſals theſe, not mine,
But of the Muſes, and their hallow'd laws,
Adminiſter'd by me. Their patient hands
Make culture ſmile, where nature ſeems to chide; 250

Nor wanting my inſtructions, or my pray'rs,
Fertility they ſcatter by their toil
Around this aged temple's wild domain.
Is Melibœus here? Thou fence ſecure
To old Oïleus from the cares of time, 255
Thrice art thou welcome. Uſeful, wiſe, belov'd,
Where'er thou ſojourneſt, on Oeta known,
As oft the bounty of a father's love
Thou on Meliſſa's ſolitude doſt pour,
Be thou director of theſe mountain hinds. 260

Th' important labour to inſpiring airs
From flutes and harps in ſymphony with hymns
Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,
In bands divided under diff'rent chiefs.
Huge timbers, blocks of marble to remove 265
They firſt attempted; then aſſembled ſtones
Looſe in their beds, and wither'd trunks, uptorn
By tempeſts; next diſmember'd from the rock
Broad, rugged fragments; from the mountains hew'd
Their venerable firs, and aged oaks, 270
Which, of their branches by the light'ning bar'd,
Preſented ſtill againſt the blaſting flame
Their hoary pride unſhaken. Theſe the Greeks,
But chief th' Athenian mariners, to force
Uniting ſkill, with maſſy leavers heave, 275
With ſtrong-knit cables drag: till, now diſpos'd,
Where great Leonidas appoints, the piles
Nod o'er the Streights. This new and ſudden ſcene
Might lift imagination to belief,
That Orpheus and Amphion from their beds 280

Of

Of ever blooming aſphodel had heard
The Muſes call; had brought their fabled harps,
At whoſe mellifluent charm once more the trees
Had burſt their fibrous bands, and marbles leap'd
In rapid motion from the quarry's womb, 285
That day to follow harmony in aid
Of gen'rous valour. Fancy might diſcern
Cerulean Tethys from her coral grot
Emerging, ſeated on her pearly car,
With Nereids, floating on the ſurge below, 290
To view in wonder from the Malian bay
The Attic ſons of Neptune, who forſook
Their wooden walls to range th'Oëtœan crags,
To rend the foreſts, and disjoin the rocks.

Meantime a hundred ſheep are ſlain. Their limbs
From burning piles fume grateful. Bounty ſpreads 296
A decent board. Simplicity attends.
Then ſpake the prieſteſs. Long-enduring chiefs,
Your efforts, now accompliſh'd, may admit
Refection due to this hard-labour'd train, 300
Due to yourſelves. Her hoſpitable ſmile
Wins her well-choſen gueſts, Laconia's king,
Her brother, Maron, Æſchylus divine,
With Acarnania's prieſt. Her firſt commands
To Melibœus ſedulous and blithe, 305
Diſtribute plenty through the toiling crowd.
Then, ſkreen'd beneath cloſe umbrage of an oak,
Each care-diveſted chief the banquet ſhares.

Cool breezes, whiſp'ring, flutter in the leaves,
Whoſe verdure, pendent in an arch, repel 310

The weft'ring fun's hot glare. Favonius bland
His breath impregnates with exhaling fweets
From flow'ry beds, whofe fcented clufters deck
The gleaming pool in view. Faft by, a brook
In limpid lapfes over native fteps 315
Attunes his cadence to fonorous ftrings,
And liquid accents of Meliffa's maids.
The floating air in melody refpires.
A rapture mingles in the calm repaft.
Uprifes Æfchylus. A goblet full 320
He grafps. To thofe divinities, who dwell
In yonder temple, this libation firft;
To thee, benignant hoftefs, next I pour;
Then to thy fame, Leonidas. He faid.
His breaft, with growing heat diftended, prompts 325
His eager hand, to whofe expreffive fign
One of the virgins cedes her facred lyre.
Their choral fong complacency reftrains.
The foul of mufic, burfting from his touch,
At once gives birth to fentiment fublime. 330

O Hercules, and Perfeus, he began,
Star-fpangled twins of Leda, and the reft
Of Jove's immediate feed, your fplendid acts
Mankind protected, while the race was rude;
While o'er the earth's uncivliz'd extent 335
The favage monfter, and the ruffian fway'd,
More favage ftill. No policy, nor laws
Had fram'd focieties. By fingle ftrength
A fingle ruffian, or a monfter fell.
The legiflator rofe. Three lights in Greece, 340

Lycurgus,

Lycurgus, Solon and Zaleucus blaz'd.
Then, ſubſtituting wiſdom, Jove profuſe
Of his own blood no longer, gave us more
In diſcipline and manners, which can form
A hero like Leonidas, than all 345
The god-begotten progeny before.
The pupils next of Solon claim the muſe.
Sound your hoarſe conchs, ye Tritons. You beheld
The Atlantēan ſhape of ſlaughter wade
Through your aſtoniſh'd deeps, his purple arm 350
Uplifting high before th'Athenian line.
You ſaw bright conqueſt, riding on the gale,
Which ſwell'd their ſails; ſaw terror at their helms
To guide their brazen beaks on Aſia's pride.
Her adamantin grapple from their decks 355
Fate threw, and ruin on the hoſtile fleet
Inextricably faſten'd. Sound, ye nymphs
Of Oeta's mountains, of her woods and ſtreams,
Who hourly witneſs to Meliſſa's worth,
Ye Oreads, Dryads, Naiads, ſound her praiſe. 360
Proclaim Zaleucus by his daughter grac'd
Like Solon and Lycurgus by their ſons.

Laconia's hero, and the prieſteſs bow'd
Their foreheads grateful to the bard ſublime.
She, riſing, takes the word. More ſweet thy lyre 365
To friendſhip's ear, than terrible to foes
Thy ſpear in battle, though the keeneſt point,
Which ever pierc'd Barbarians. Cloſe we here
The ſong and banquet. Hark! a diſtant din
From Aſia's camp requires immediate care. 370

She leads. Along the rocky verge they paſs.
In calm delight Leonidas ſurveys
All in the order which he laſt aſſign'd;
As o'er Thermopylæ beneath he caſt
A wary look. The mountain's furtheſt crag 375
Now reach'd, Meliſſa to the king began.

Observe that ſpace below, diſpers'd in dales,
In hollows, winding through d'ſſever'd rocks.
The ſlender outlet, ſkreen'd by yonder ſhrubs,
Leads to the paſs. There ſtately to my view 380
The martial queen of Caria yeſter ſun,
Deſcending ſhew'd. Her loudly I reprov'd.
But ſhe, devoted to the Perſian king,
In ambuſh there preſerv'd his flying hoſt.
She laſt retreated; but, retreating, prov'd 385
Her valour equal to a better cauſe.
Again I ſee the heroine approach.

Megistias then. I ſee a powerful arm,
Suſtaining firm the large, emblazon'd ſhield,
Which, faſhion'd firſt in Caria, we have learn'd 390
To imitate in Greece. Sublime her port
Beſpeaks a mighty ſpirit. Prieſteſs, look.
An act of piety ſhe now performs,
Directing thoſe, perhaps her Carian band,
To bear dead brethren from the bloody field. 395
Among the horſemen an exalted form
Like Demaratus ſtrikes my ſearching eye.
To me, recalling his tranſcendent rank
In Sparta once, he ſeems a languid ſun,
Which dimly ſinks in exhalations dark, 400

Enveloping

Enveloping his radiance. While he ſpake,
Intent on martial duty Medon views
The dang'rous thicket; Lacedæmon's chief,
Around the region his conſid'rate eye
Extending, marks each movement of the foe. 405

Th' imperial Perſian from his lofty car
Had in the morning's early conflict ſeen
His vanquiſh'd army, pouring from the ſtreights
Back to their tents, and o'er his camp diſpers'd
In conſternation; as a river burſts 410
Impetuous from his fountain, then, enlarg'd,
Spreads a dead ſurface o'er ſome level marſh.
Th' aſtoniſh'd king thrice ſtarted from his ſeat;
Shame, fear, and indignation rent his breaſt,
As ruin irreſiſtible were near 415
To overwhelm his millions. Haſte, he call'd
To Hyperanthes, haſte and meet the Greeks.
Their daring rage, their inſolence repel.
From ſuch diſhonour vindicate our name.

His royal brother thro' th' extenſive camp 420
Obedient mov'd. Deliberate and brave,
Each active prince from ev'ry tent remote,
The hardieſt troops he ſummon'd. Caria's queen,
To Hyperanthes bound by firm eſteem
Of worth, unrivall'd in the Perſian court, 425
In ſolemn pace was now returning ſlow
Before a band, tranſporting from the field
Their ſlain companions to the ſandy beach.

She ſtopp'd, and thus addreſs'd him. Learn, O prince,
From one, whoſe wiſhes on thy merit wait, 430

The only means to bind thy gallant brow
In faireſt wreaths. To break the Grecian line
In vain ye ſtruggle, unarray'd and lax,
Depriv'd of union. Try to form one band
In order'd ranks, and emulate the foe. 435
Nor to ſecure a thicket next the paſs
Forget. Selected numbers ſtation there.
Farewel, young hero. May thy fortune prove
Unlike to mine. Had Aſia's millions ſpar'd
One myriad to ſuſtain me, none had ſeen 440
Me quit the dang'rous conteſt. But the head
Of baſe Argeſtes on ſome future day
Shall feel my treaſur'd vengeance. From the fleet
I only ſtay, till burial rites are paid
To theſe dead Carians. On this fatal ſtrand 445
May Artemiſia's grief appeaſe your ghoſts,
My faithful ſubjects, ſacrific'd in vain.

The hero grateful and reſpectful heard,
What ſoon his warmth neglected at the ſight
Of ſpears, which flam'd innumerable round. 450
Beyond the reſt in luſtre was a band,
The ſatellites of Xerxes. They forſook
Their conſtant orbit round th' imperial throne
At this dread criſis. To a myriad fix'd,
From their unchanging number they deriv'd 455
The title of immortals. Light their ſpears;
Set in pomegranates of refulgent gold,
Or burniſh'd ſilver, were the ſlender blades.
Magnificent and ſtately were the ranks.
The prince, commanding mute attention, ſpake. 460

In two divisions part your number, chiefs.
One will I lead to onset. In my ranks
Abrocomes, Hydarnes shall advance,
Pandates, Mindus, Intaphernes brave,
To wrest this short-liv'd victory from Greece. 465
Thou, Abradates, by Sosarmes join'd,
Orontes and Mazæus, keep the rest
From action. Future succour they must lend,
Should envious fate exhaust our num'rous files.
For, O pure Mithra, may thy radiant eye 470
Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,
The Persian name dishonour. May the acts
Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led
By Cyrus, gave one monarch to the east,
In us revive. O think, ye Persian lords, 475
What endless infamy will blast your names,
Should Greece, that narrow portion of the earth,
Your pow'r defy: when Babylon hath low'r'd
Her towring crest, when Lydia's pride is quell'd
In Crœsus vanquish'd, when her empire lost 480
Ecbatana deplores. Ye chosen guard,
Your king's immortal bulwark, O reflect,
What deeds from your superior swords he claims.
You share his largest bounty. To your faith,
Your constancy and prowess, he commits 485
His throne, his person, and this day his fame.

They wave their banners, blazing in the sun,
Who then three hours tow'rd Hesperus had driv'n
From his meridian height. Amid their shouts
The hoarse-resounding billows are not heard. 490

Of diff'rent nations, and in diff'rent garb,
Innumerous and vary'd like the ſhells,
By reſtleſs Tethys ſcatter'd on the beach,
O'er which they trod, the multitude advanc'd,
Straight by Leonidas deſcry'd. The van 495
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,
Pandates, Mindus. Violent their march
Sweeps down the rocky, hollow-ſounding paſs.
So, where th' unequal globe in mountains ſwells,
A torrent rolls his thund'ring ſurge between 500
The ſteep-erected cliffs; tumultuous daſh
The waters, burſting on the pointed crags:
The valley roars; the marble channel foams.
Th' undaunted Greeks immoveably withſtand
The dire encounter. Soon th' impetuous ſhock 505
Of thouſands and of myriads ſhakes the ground.
Stupendous ſcene of terror! Under hills,
Whoſe ſides, half-arching, o'er the hoſts project,
The unabating fortitude of Greece
Maintains her line, th' untrain'd Barbarians charge 510
In ſavage fury. With inverted trunks,
Or bent obliquely from the ſhagged ridge,
The ſylvan horrors overſhade the fight.
The clanging trump, the craſh of mingled ſpears,
The groan of death, and war's diſcordant ſhouts 515
Alarm the echoes in their neighb'ring caves;
Woods, cliffs, and ſhores return the dreadful ſound.

THE END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

BOOK

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Hyperanthes, discontinuing the fight, while he waits for reinforcements, Teribazus, a Persian remarkable for his merit and learning, and highly beloved by Hyperanthes, but unhappy in his passion for Ariana, a daughter of Darius, advances from the rest of the army to the rescue of a friend in distress, who lay wounded on the field of battle. Teribazus is attacked by Diophantus the Mantinean, whom he overcomes; then engaging with Dithyrambus, is himself slain. Hyperanthes hastens to his succour. A general battle ensues, where Diomedon distinguishes his valour. Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, partly by their own efforts, and partly by the perfidy of the Thebans, who desert the line, being on the point of forcing the Grecians, are repulsed by the Lacedæmonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and, making an improvement in their discipline, renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his army: Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are intirely destroyed.

AMID the van of Persia was a youth,
Nam'd Teribazus, not for golden stores,
Not for wide pastures, travers'd o'er by herds,
By fleece-abounding sheep, or gen'rous steeds,
Nor yet for pow'r, nor splendid honours fam'd. 5

Rich

Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine;
Through ev'ry path of ſcience had he walk'd,
The votary of wiſdom. In the years,
When tender down inveſts the ruddy cheek,
He with the Magi turn'd the hallow'd page 10
Of Zoroaſtres. Then his tow'ring thoughts
High on the plumes of contemplation ſoar'd.
He from the lofty Babylonian fane
With learn'd Chaldæans trac'd the heav'nly ſphere,
There number'd o'er the vivid fires, which gleam 15
On night's beſpangled boſom. Nor unheard
Were Indian ſages from ſequeſter'd bow'rs,
While on the banks of Ganges they diſclos'd
The pow'rs of nature, whether in the woods,
The fruitful glebe, or flow'r, the healing plant, 20
The limpid waters, or the ambient air,
Or in the purer element of fire.
The realm of old Seſoſtris next he view'd,
Myſterious Ægypt with her hidden rites
Of Iſis and Oſiris. Laſt he ſought 25
Th' Ionian Greeks, from Athens ſprung, nor paſs'd
Miletus by, which once in rapture heard
The tongue of Thales, nor Priene's walls,
Where wiſdom dwelt with Bias, nor the ſeat
Of Pittacus, rever'd on Leſbian ſhores. 30

Th' enlighten'd youth to Suſa now return'd,
Place of his birth. His merit ſoon was dear
To Hyperanthes. It was now the time,
That diſcontent and murmur on the banks
Of Nile were loud and threat'ning. Chembes there 35

The only faithful ſtood, a potent lord,
Whom Xerxes held by promis'd nuptial ties
With his own blood. To this Ægyptian prince
Bright Ariana was the deſtin'd ſpouſe,
From the ſame bed with Hyperanthes born. 40
Among her guards was Teribazus nam'd
By that fond brother, tender of her weal.

Th' Ægyptian boundaries they gain. They hear
Of inſurrection, of the Pharian tribes
In arms, and Chembes in the tumult ſlain. 45
They pitch their tents, at midnight are aſſail'd,
Surpris'd, their leaders maſſacred, the ſlaves
Of Ariana captives borne away,
Her own pavilion forc'd, her perſon ſeiz'd
By ruffian hands: when timely to redeem 50
Her and th' invaded camp from further ſpoil
Flies Teribazus with a rally'd band,
Swift on her chariot ſeats the royal fair,
Nor waits the dawn. Of all her menial train
None but three female ſlaves are left. Her guide, 55
Her comforter and guardian fate provides
In him, diſtinguiſh'd by his worth alone,
No prince, nor ſatrap, now the ſingle chief
Of her ſurviving guard. Of regal birth,
But with excelling graces in her ſoul; 60
Unlike an eaſtern princeſs ſhe inclines
To his conſoling, his inſtructive tongue
An humbled ear. Amid the converſe ſweet
Her charms, her mind, her virtues he explores,
Admiring. Soon is admiration chang'd 65

To

To love; nor loves he fooner, than defpairs.
From morn till ev'n her paffing wheels he guards
Back to Euphrates. Often, as fhe mounts,
Or quits the car, his arm her weight fuftains
With trembling pleafure. His affiduous hand 70
From pureft fountains wafts the living flood.
Nor feldom by the fair-one's foft command
Would he repofe him, at her feet reclin'd;
While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,
Won by his grateful eloquence, which footh'd 75
With fweet variety the tedious march,
Beguiling time. He too would then forget
His pains awhile, in raptures vain entranc'd,
Delufion all, and fleeting rays of joy,
Soon overcaft by more intenfe defpair; 80
Like wintry clouds, which, op'ning for a time,
Tinge their black folds with gleams of fcatter'd light,
Then, fwiftly clofing, on the brow of morn
Condenfe their horrors, and in thickeft gloom
The ruddy beauty veil. They now approach 85
The tow'r of Belus. Hyperanthes leads
Through Babylon an army to chaftife
The crime of Ægypt. Teribazus here
Parts from his princefs, marches bright in fteel
Beneath his patron's banner, gathers palms 90
On conquer'd Nile. To Sufa he returns,
To Ariana's refidence, and bears
Deep in his heart th' immedicable wound.
But unreveal'd and filent was his pain;
Nor yet in folitary fhades he roam'd, 95

Nor

Nor ſhunn'd reſort: but o'er his ſorrows caſt
A ſickly dawn of gladneſs, and in ſmiles
Conceal'd his anguiſh; while the ſecret flame
Rag'd in his boſom, and its peace conſum'd:
His ſoul ſtill brooding o'er theſe mournful thoughts. 100

Can I, O Wiſdom, find relief in thee,
Who doſt approve my paſſion? From the ſnares
Of beauty only thou wouldſt guard my heart.
But here thyſelf art charm'd; where ſoftneſs, grace,
And every virtue dignify deſire. 105
Yet thus to love, deſpairing to poſſeſs,
Of all the torments, by relentleſs fate
On life inflicted, is the moſt ſevere.
Do I not feel thy warnings in my breaſt,
That flight alone can ſave me? I will go 110
Back to the learn'd Chaldæans, on the banks
Of Ganges ſeek the ſages; where to heav'n
With thee my elevated ſoul ſhall tow'r.
O wretched Teribazus! all conſpires
Againſt thy peace. Our mighty lord prepares 115
To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth
Is call'd to war; and I, who lately pois'd
With no inglorious arm the ſoldier's lance,
Who near the ſide of Hyperanthes fought,
Muſt join the throng. How therefore can I fly 120
From Ariana, who with Aſia's queens
The ſplendid camp of Xerxes muſt adorn?
Then be it ſo. Again I will adore
Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,
Her gracious ſweetneſs ſhall again diffuſe 125

Refiftlefs magic through my ravifh'd heart;
Till paffion, thus with double rage enflam'd,
Swells to diftraction in my tortur'd breaft,
Then—but in vain through darknefs do I fearch
My fate—Defpair and fortune be my guides. 130

THE day arriv'd, when Xerxes firft advanc'd
His arms from Sufa's gates. The Perfian dames,
So were accuftom'd all the eaftern fair,
In fumptuous cars accompany'd his march,
A beauteous train, by Ariana grac'd. 135
Her Teribazus follows, on her wheels
Attends and pines. Such woes opprefs the youth,
Opprefs, but not enervate. From the van
He in this fecond conflict had withftood
The threat'ning frown of adamantine Mars, 140
He fingly, while his braveft friends recoil'd,
His manly temples no tiara bound.
The flender lance of Afia he difdain'd,
And her light target. Eminent he tow'r'd
In Grecian arms the wonder of his foes; 145
Among th' Ionians were his ftrenuous limbs
Train'd in the gymnic fchool. A fulgent cafque
Inclos'd his head. Before his face and cheft
Down to the knees an ample fhield was fpread.
A pond'rous fpear he fhook. The well-aim'd point 150
Sent two Phliafians to the realms of death,
With four Tegæans, whofe indignant chief,
Brave Hegefander, vengeance breath'd in vain,
With ftreaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far unmatch'd,
His arm prevail'd; when Hyperanthes call'd 155

From

From fight his fainting legions. Now each band
Their languid courage reinforc'd by reſt:
Mean time with Teribazus thus conferr'd
Th' applauding prince. Thou much deſerving youth,
Had twenty warriors in the dang'rous van 160
Like thee maintain'd the onſet, Greece had wept
Her proſtrate ranks. The weary'd fight awhile
I now relax, till Abradates ſtrong,
Orontes and Mazæus are advanc'd.
Then to the conflict will I give no pauſe. 165
If not by prowefs, yet by endleſs toil
Succeſſive numbers ſhall exhauſt the foe.
He ſaid. Immers'd in ſadneſs, ſcarce reply'd,
But to himſelf complain'd the am'rous youth.

STILL do I languiſh, mourning o'er the fame, 170
My arm acquires. Tormented heart! thou ſeat
Of conſtant ſorrow, what deceitful ſmiles
Yet canſt thou borrow from unreal hope
To flatter life? at Ariana's feet
What if with ſupplicating knees I bow, 175
Implore her pity, and reveal my love.
Wretch! canſt thou climb to yon effulgent orb,
And ſhare the ſplendors, which irradiate heav'n?
Doſt thou aſpire to that exalted maid,
Great Xerxes' ſiſter, rivalling the claim 180
Of Aſia's proudeſt potentates and kings?
Unleſs within her boſom I inſpir'd
A paſſion fervent, as my own, nay more,
Such, as diſpelling ev'ry virgin fear,
Might, unreſtrain'd, diſcloſe its fond deſire, 185

My love is hopelefs; and her willing hand,
Should fhe beftow it, draws from Afia's lord
On both perdition. By defpair benumb'd,
His limbs their action lofe. A wifh for death
O'ercafts and chills his foul. When fudden cries 190
From Ariamnes roufe his drooping pow'rs.
Alike in manners they of equal age
Were friends, and partners in the glorious toil
Of war. Together they victorious chac'd
The bleeding fons of Nile, when Ægypt's pride 195
Before the fword of Hyperanthes fell.
That lov'd companion Teribazus views
By all abandon'd, in his gore outftretch'd
The victor's fpoil. His languid fpirit ftarts;
He rufhes ardent from the Perfian line; 200
The wounded warrior in his ftrong embrace
He bears away. By indignation ftung,
Fierce from the Grecians Diophantus fends
A loud defiance. Teribazus leaves
His refcu'd friend. His maffy fhield he rears; 205
High brandifhing his formidable fpear,
He turns intrepid on th' approaching foe.
Amazement follows. On he ftrides, and fhakes
The plumed honours of his fhining creft.
Th' ill-fated Greek awaits th' unequal fight, 210
Pierc'd in the throat, with founding arms he falls.
Through ev'ry file the Mantineans mourn.
Long on the flain the victor fix'd his fight
With thefe reflections. By thy fplendid arms
Thou art a Greek of no ignoble rank. 215
From

From thy ill fortune I perhaps derive
A more conſpicuous luſtre—What if heav'n
Should add new victims, ſuch as thou, to grace
My undeſerving hand? Who knows, but ſhe
Might ſmile upon my trophies. Oh! vain thought! 220
I ſee the pride of Aſia's monarch ſwell
With vengeance fatal to her beauteous head.
Diſperſe, ye phantom hopes. Too long, torn heart,
Haſt thou with grief contended. Lo! I plant
My foot this moment on the verge of death, 225
By fame invited, by deſpair impell'd
To paſs th' irremeable bound. No more
Shall Teribazus backward turn his ſtep,
But here conclude his doom. Then ceaſe to heave,
Thou troubled boſom, ev'ry thought be calm 230
Now at th' approach of everlaſting peace.

He ended; when a mighty foe drew nigh,
Not leſs than Dithyrambus. Ere they join'd,
The Perſian warrior to the Greek began.

Art thou th' unconquerable chief, who mow'd 235
Our battle down? That eagle on thy ſhield
Too well proclaims thee. To attempt thy force
I raſhly purpos'd. That my ſingle arm
Thou deign'ſt to meet, accept my thanks, and know,
The thought of conqueſt leſs employs my ſoul, 240
Than admiration of thy glorious deeds,
And that by thee I cannot fall diſgrac'd.

He ceas'd. Theſe words the Theſpian youth return'd.
Of all the praiſes from thy gen'rous mouth
The only portion my deſert may claim, 245

Is this my bold adventure to confront
Thee yet unmatch'd. What Grecian hath not mark'd
Thy flaming steel? From Asia's boundless camp
Not one hath equall'd thy victorious might.
But whence thy armour of the Grecian form? 250
Whence thy tall spear, thy helmet? Whence the weight
Of that strong shield? Unlike thy eastern friends,
O if thou be'st some fugitive, who, lost
To liberty and virtue, art become
A tyrant's vile stipendiary, that arm, 255
That valour thus triumphant I deplore,
Which after all their efforts and success
Deserve no honour from the gods, or men.

HERE Teribazus in a sigh rejoin'd.
I am to Greece a stranger, am a wretch 260
To thee unknown, who courts this hour to die,
Yet not ignobly, but in death to raise
My name from darkness, while I end my woes.

THE Grecian then. I view thee, and I mourn.
A dignity, which virtue only bears, 265
Firm resolution, seated on thy brow,
Though grief hath dimm'd thy drooping eye, demand
My veneration: and, whatever be
The malice of thy fortune, what the cares,
Infesting thus thy quiet, they create 270
Within my breast the pity of a friend.
Why then, constraining my reluctant hand
To act against thee, will thy might support
Th' unjust ambition of malignant kings,
The foes to virtue, liberty, and peace? 275

Yet free from rage or enmity I lift
My adverſe weapon. Victory I aſk.
Thy life may fate for happier days reſerve.
 THIS ſaid, their beaming lances they protend,
Of hoſtile hate or fury both devoid, 280
As on the Iſthmian or Olympic ſands
For fame alone contending. Either hoſt,
Pois'd on their arms, in ſilent wonder gaze.
The fight commences. Soon the Grecian ſpear,
Which, all the day in conſtant battle worn, 285
Unnumber'd ſhields and corſelets had transfix'd,
Againſt the Perſian buckler, ſhiv'ring, breaks,
Its maſter's hand diſarming. Then began
The ſenſe of honour, and the dread of ſhame
To ſwell in Dithyrambus. Undiſmay'd, 290
He grappled with his foe, and inſtant ſeiz'd
His threat'ning ſpear, before th' uplifted arm
Could execute the meditated wound.
The weapon burſt between their ſtruggling graſp.
Their hold they looſen, bare their ſhining ſwords. 295
With equal ſwiftneſs to defend or charge,
Each active youth advances and recedes.
On ev'ry ſide they traverſe. Now direct,
Obliquely now the wheeling blades deſcend.
Still is the conflict dubious; when the Greek, 300
Diſſembling, points his faulchion to the ground,
His arm depreſſing, as o'ercome by toil:
While with his buckler cautious he repels
The blows, repeated by his active foe.
Greece trembles for her hero. Joy pervades 305

The

The ranks of Aſia ; Hyperanthes ſtrides
Before the line, preparing to receive
His friend triumphant : while the wary Greek
Calm and defenſive bears th' aſſault. At laſt,
As by th' incautious fury of his ſtrokes, 310
The Perſian ſwung his cov'ring ſhield aſide,
The fatal moment Dithyrambus ſeiz'd.
Light darting forward with his feet outſtretch'd,
Between th' unguarded ribs he plung'd his ſteel.
Affection, grief and terror wing the ſpeed 315
Of Hyperanthes. From his bleeding foe
The Greek retires, not diſtant, and awaits
The Perſian prince. But he with watry cheeks
In ſpeechleſs anguiſh claſps his dying friend ;
From whoſe cold lip with interrupted phraſe 320
Theſe accents break. O deareſt, beſt of men !
Ten thouſand thoughts of gratitude and love
Are ſtruggling in my heart—O'erpow'ring fate
Denies my voice the utt'rance—O my friend !
O Hyperanthes ! Hear my tongue unfold 325
What, had I liv'd, thou never ſhould'ſt have known.
I lov'd thy ſiſter. With deſpair I lov'd.
Soliciting this honourable doom,
Without regret in Perſia's ſight and thine
I fall. Th' inexorable hand of fate 330
Weighs down his eye-lids, and the gloom of death
His fleeting light eternally o'erſhades.
Him on Choaſpes o'er the blooming verge
A frantic mother ſhall bewail ; ſhall ſtrew
Her ſilver treſſes in the cryſtal wave: 335

While

While all the ſhores re-echo to the name
Of Teribazus loſt. Th' afflicted prince,
Contemplating in tears the pallid corſe,
Vents in theſe words the bitterneſs of grief.

Oh! Teribazus! Oh! my friend, whoſe loſs 340
I will deplore for ever. Oh! what pow'r,
By me, by thee offended, clos'd thy breaſt
To Hyperanthes in diſtruſt unkind!
She ſhould, ſhe muſt have lov'd thee—Now no more
Thy placid virtues, thy inſtructive tongue 345
Shall drop their ſweetneſs on my ſecret hours.
But in complaints doth friendſhip waſte the time,
Which to immediate vengeance ſhould be giv'n?

He ended, ruſhing furious on the Greek;
Who, while his gallant enemy expir'd, 350
While Hyperanthes tenderly receiv'd
The laſt embraces of his gaſping friend,
Stood nigh, reclin'd in ſadneſs on his ſhield,
And in the pride of victory repin'd.
Unmark'd, his foe approach'd. But forward ſprung 355
Diomedon. Before the Theſpian youth
Aloft he rais'd his targe, and loudly thus.

Hold thee, Barbarian, from a life more worth,
Than thou and Xerxes with his hoſt of ſlaves.

His words he ſeconds with his rapid lance. 360
Soon a tremendous conflict had enſu'd;
But Intaphernes, Mindus, and a croud
Of Perſian lords, advancing, fill the ſpace
Betwixt th' encount'ring chiefs. In mutual wrath,
With fruitleſs efforts they attempt the fight. 365

So

So rage two bulls along th' oppofing banks
Of fome deep flood, which parts the fruitful mead.
Defiance thunders from their angry mouths
In vain: in vain the furrow'd fod they rend;
Wide rolls the ftream, and intercepts the war. 370

As by malignant fortune if a drop
Of moifture mingles with the burning mafs
Of liquid metal, inftant fhow'rs of death
On ev'ry fide th' exploding ruin fpreads;
So difappointment irritates the flame 375
Of fierce Platæa's chief, whofe vengeance burfts
In wide deftruction. Embas, Daucus fall,
Arfæus, Ochus, Mendes, Artias die;
And ten moft hardy of th' immortal guard,
To fhivers breaking on the Grecian fhield 380
Their gold-embellifh'd weapons, raife a mound
O'er thy pale body, O in prime deftroy'd,
Of Afia's garden once the faireft plant,
Fall'n Teribazus! Thy diftracted friend
From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd 385
By forceful zeal of fatraps to the fhore;
Where then the brave Abrocomes arrang'd
The fuccours new, by Abradates brought,
Orontes and Mazæus. Turning fwift,
Abrocomes inform'd his brother thus. 390

Strong reinforcement from th' immortal guard
Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,
In charge to harrafs by perpetual toil
Thofe Grecians next the mountain. Thou unite
To me thy valour. Here the hoftile ranks 395

Lefs ftable feem. Our joint impreffion try;
Let all the weight of battle here impend.
Roufe, Hyperanthes. Give regret to winds.
Who hath not loft a friend this direful day?
Let not our private cares affift the Greeks 400
Too ftrong already; or let forrow act:
Mourn and revenge. Thefe animating words
Send Hyperanthes to the foremoft line.
His vengeful ardor leads. The battle joins.

Who ftemm'd this tide of onfet? Who imbru'd 405
His fhining fpear the firft in Perfian blood?
Eupalamus. Artembares he flew
With Derdas fierce, whom Caucafus had rear'd
On his tempeftuous brow, the favage fons
Of violence and rapine. But their doom 410
Fires Hyperanthes, whofe vindictive blade
Arrefts the victor in his haughty courfe.
Beneath the ftrong Abrocomes o'erwhelm'd,
Meliffus fwells the number of the dead.
None could Mycenæ boaft of prouder birth, 415
Than young Meliffus, who in filver mail
The line embellifh'd. He in Cirrha's mead,
Where high Parnaffus from his double top
O'erfhades the Pythian games, the envy'd prize
Of fame obtain'd. Low finks his laurell'd head 420
In death's cold night; and horrid gore deforms
The graceful hair. Impatient to revenge
Ariftobulus ftrides before the van.
A ftorm of fury darkens all his brow.
Around he rolls his gloomy eye. For death 425

Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,
Deriv'd from Crœſus, once imperial lord
Of nations. Him the nymphs of Halys wept;
When, with deluſive oracles beguil'd
By Delphi's god, he paſs'd their fatal waves 430
A mighty empire to diſſolve: nor knew
Th' ill-deſtin'd prince, that envious fortune watch'd
That direful moment from his hand to wreſt
The ſceptre of his fathers. In the ſhade
Of humble life his race on Tmolus' brow 435
Lay hid; till, rous'd to battle, on this field
Sinks Alyattes, and a royal breed
In him extinct for ever. Lycis dies,
For boiſt'rous war ill-choſen. He was ſkill'd
To tune the lulling flute, and melt the heart; 440
Or with his pipe's awak'ning ſtrain allure
The lovely dames of Lydia to the dance.
They on the verdant level graceful mov'd
In vary'd meaſures; while the cooling breeze
Beneath their ſwelling garments wanton'd o'er 445
Their ſnowy breaſts, and ſmooth Caÿſter's ſtream,
Soft-gliding, murmur'd by. The hoſtile blade
Draws forth his entrails. Prone he falls. Not long
The victor triumphs. From the proſtrate corſe
Of Lycis while inſulting he extracts 450
The reeking weapon, Hyperanthes' ſteel
Invades his knee, and cuts the ſinewy cords.
The Mycenæans with uplifted ſhields,
Corinthians and Phliaſians cloſe around
The wounded chieftain. In redoubled rage 455

The

The conteſt glows. Abrocomes incites
Each noble Perſian. Each his voice obeys.
Here Abradates, there Mazæus preſs,
Orontes and Hydarnes. None retire
From toil or peril. Urg'd on ev'ry ſide, 460
Mycenæ's band to fortune leave their chief.
Deſpairing, raging, deſtitute he ſtands,
Propt on his ſpear. His wounds forbid retreat.
None but his brother, Eumenes, abides
The dire extremity. His ſtudded orb 465
Is held defenſive. On his arm the ſword
Of Hyperanthes rapidly deſcends.
Down drops the buckler, and the ſever'd hand
Reſigns its hold. The unprotected pair
By Aſia's hero to the ground are ſwept; 470
As to a reaper crimſon poppies low'r
Their heads luxuriant on the yellow plain.
From both their breaſts the vital currents flow,
And mix their ſtreams. Elate the Perſians pour
Their numbers, deep'ning on the foe diſmay'd. 475
The Greeks their ſtation painfully maintain.
This Anaxander ſaw, whoſe faithleſs tongue
His colleague Leontiades beſpake.

THE hour is come to ſerve our Perſian friends.
Behold, the Greeks are preſs'd. Let Thebes retire, 480
A bloodleſs conqueſt yielding to the king.

THIS ſaid, he drew his Thebans from their poſt,
Not with unpuniſh'd treachery. The lance
Of Abradates gor'd their foul retreat;
Nor knew the Aſian chief that Aſia's friends 485

Before him bled. Mean time, as mighty Jove,
Or he more ancient on the throne of heav'n,
When from the womb of Chaos dark the world
Emerg'd to birth, where'er he view'd the jar
Of atoms yet difcordant and unform'd, 490
Confufion thence with pow'rful voice difpell'd,
Till light and order univerfal reign'd;
So from the hill Leonidas furvey'd
The various war. He faw the Theban rout;
That Corinth, Phlius and Mycenæ look'd 495
Affrighted backward. Inftantly his charge
Is borne by Maron, whom obedience wings,
Precipitating down the facred cave,
That Sparta's ranks, advancing, fhould repair
The difunited phalanx. Ere they move, 500
Dieneces infpires them. Fame, my friends,
Calls forth your valour in a fignal hour.
For you this glorious crifis fhe referv'd
Laconia's fplendor to affert. Young man,
Son of Megiftias, follow. He conducts 505
Th'experienc'd troop. They lock their fhields, and wedg'd
In denfe arrangement, repoffefs the void
Left by the faithlefs Thebans, and repulfe
Th' exulting Perfians. When with efforts vain
Thefe oft renew'd the conteft, and recoil'd, 510
As oft confounded with diminifh'd ranks;
Lo! Hyperanthes blufh'd, repeating late
The words of Artemifia. Learn, O chiefs,
The only means of glory and fuccefs.
Unlike the others, whom we newly chac'd, 515
Thefe

These are a band, selected from the Greeks,
Perhaps the Spartans, whom we often hear
By Demaratus prais'd. To break their line
In vain we struggle, unarray'd and lax,
Depriv'd of union. Do not we preside 520
O'er Asia's armies, and our courage boast,
Our martial art above the vulgar herd?
Let us, ye chiefs, attempt in order'd ranks
To form a troop, and emulate the foe.

THEY wait not dubious. On the Malian shore 525
In gloomy depth a column soon is form'd
Of all the nobles, Abradates strong,
Orontes bold, Mazæus, and the might
Of brave Abrocomes with each, who bore
The highest honours, and excell'd in arms; 530
Themselves the lords of nations, who before
The throne of Xerxes tributary bow'd.
To these succeed a chosen number, drawn
From Asia's legions, vaunted most in fight;
Who from their king perpetual stipends share; 535
Who, station'd round the provinces, by force
His tyranny uphold. In ev'ry part
Is Hyperanthes active, ardent seen
Throughout the huge battalion. He adjusts
Their equal range, then cautious, lest on march 540
Their unaccustom'd order should relax,
Full in the center of the foremost rank
Orontes plants, committing to his hand
Th' imperial standard; whose expanded folds
Glow'd in the air, presenting to the sun 545

The richeſt dye of Tyre. The royal bird
Amid the gorgeous tincture ſhone expreſs'd
In high-embroider'd gold. The wary prince
On this conſpicuous, leading ſign of war
Commands each ſatrap, poſted in the van, 550
To fix his eye regardful, to direct
By this alone his even pace and ſlow,
Retiring or advancing. So the ſtar,
Chief of the ſpangles on the fancy'd bear,
Once an Idæan nymph, and nurſe of Jove, 555
Bright Cynoſura to the Boreal pole
Attracts the ſailor's eye: when diſtance hides
The headland ſignals, and her guiding ray,
New-ris'n, ſhe throws. The hero next appoints,
That ev'ry warrior through the length'ning files, 560
Obſerving none, but thoſe before him plac'd,
Shall watch their motions, and their ſteps purſue.
Nor is th' important thicket next the paſs
Forgot. Two thouſand of th' immortal guard
That ſtation ſeize. His orders all perform'd, 565
Cloſe by the ſtandard he aſſumes his poſt.
Intrepid thence he animates his friends.

HEROIC chieftains, whoſe unconquer'd force
Rebellious Ægypt and the Lybian felt,
Think, what the ſplendor of your former deeds 570
From you exacts. Remember, from the great
Illuſtrious actions are a debt to fame.
No middle path remains for them to tread,
Whom ſhe hath once ennobled. Lo! this day
By trophies new will ſignalize your names, 575
Or in diſhonour will for ever cloud. HE

He ſaid, and vig'rous all to fight proceed.
As when tempeſtuous Eurus ſtems the weight
Of weſtern Neptune, ſtruggling through the ſtreights,
Which bound Alcides' labours, here the ſtorm 580
With rapid wing reverberates the tide;
There the contending ſurge with furrow'd tops
To mountains ſwells, and, whelming o'er the beach
On either coaſt, impels the hoary foam
On Mauritanian and Iberian ſtrands: 585
Such is the dreadful onſet. Perſia keeps
Her foremoſt ranks unbroken, which are fill'd
By choſen warriors; while the num'rous crowd,
Though ſtill promiſcuous pouring from behind,
Give weight and preſſure to th' embattled chiefs, 590
Deſpiſing danger. Like the mural ſtrength
Of ſome proud city, bulwark'd round and arm'd
With riſing tow'rs to guard her wealthy ſtores,
Immoveable, impenetrable ſtood
Laconia's ſerry'd phalanx. In their face 595
Grim tyranny her threat'ning fetters ſhakes,
Red havoc grinds inſatiable his jaws.
Greece is behind, entruſting to their ſwords
Her laws, her freedom, and the ſacred urns
Of their forefathers. Preſent now to thought 600
Their altars riſe, the manſions of their birth,
Whate'er they honour, venerate and love.

Bright in the Perſian van th' exalted lance
Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beſide him preſs'd
Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk 605

Of Abradates terrible in war.
Firm, as a Memphian pyramid, was seen
Dieneces; while Agis close in rank
With Menalippus, and the added ſtrength
Of dauntleſs Maron, their connected ſhields 610
Upheld. Each unrelax'd array maintains
The conflict undecided; nor could Greece
Repel the adverſe numbers, nor the weight
Of Aſia's band ſelect remove the Greeks.

Swift from Laconia's king, perceiving ſoon 615
The Perſian's new arangement, Medon flew,
Who thus the ſtaid Dieneces addreſs'd.

Leonidas commands the Spartan ranks
To meaſure back ſome paces. Soon, he deems,
The unexperienc'd foes in wild purſuit 620
Will break their order. Then the charge renew.

This heard, the ſignal of retreat is giv'n.
The Spartans ſeem to yield. The Perſians ſtop.
Aſtoniſhment reſtrains them, and the doubt
Of unexpected victory. Their ſloth 625
Abrocomes awakens. By the ſun
They fly before us. My victorious friends,
Do you delay to enter Greece? Away,
Ruſh on intrepid. I already hear
Our horſe, our chariots thund'ring on her plains. 630
I ſee her temples wrapt in Grecian fires.

He ſpake. In hurry'd violence they roll
Tumultuous forward. All in headlong pace
Disjoin their order, and the line diſſolve.
This when the ſage Dieneces deſcries, 635

The

The Spartans halt, returning to the charge
With ſudden vigour. In a moment pierc'd
By his reſiſtleſs ſteel, Orontes falls,
And quits th' imperial banner. This the chief
In triumph waves. The Spartans preſs the foe 640
Cloſe-wedg'd and ſquare, in ſlow, progreſſive pace,
O'er heaps of mangled carcaſes and arms
Invincible they tread. Compoſing flutes
Each thought, each motion harmonize. No rage
Untunes their ſouls. The phalanx yet more deep 645
Of Medon follows; while the lighter bands
Glide by the flanks, and reach the broken foe.
Amid their flight what vengeance from the arm
Of Alpheus falls? O'er all in ſwift purſuit
Was he renown'd. His active feet had match'd 650
The ſon of Peleus in the duſty courſe;
But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs
Of Polydorus animate his ſtrength
With ten-fold vigour. Like th' empurpled moon,
When in eclipſe her ſilver diſk hath loſt 655
The wonted light, his buckler's poliſh'd face
Is now obſcur'd; the figur'd boſſes drop
In crimſon, ſpouting from his deathful ſtrokes.
As, when with horror wing'd, a whirlwind rends
A ſhatter'd navy; from the ocean caſt, 660
Enormous fragments hide the level beach;
Such as dejected Perſia late beheld
On Theſſaly's unnavigable ſtrand:
Thus o'er the champain ſatraps lay beſtrewn
By Alpheus, perſevering in purſuit 665

Beyond

Beyond the paſs. Not Phœbus could inflict
On Niobè more vengeance, when, incens'd
By her maternal arrogance, which ſcorn'd
Latona's race, he twang'd his ireful bow,
And one by one from youth and beauty hurl'd 670
Her ſons to Pluto; nor ſeverer pangs
That mother felt, than pierc'd the gen'rous ſoul
Of Hyperanthes, while his nobleſt friends
On ev'ry ſide lay gaſping. With deſpair
He ſtill contends. Th' immortals from their ſtand 675
Behind th' entangling thicket next the paſs
His ſignal rouſes. Ere they clear their way,
Well-caution'd Medon from the cloſe defile
Two thouſand Locrians pours. An aſpect new
The fight aſſumes. Through implicated ſhrubs 680
Confuſion waves each banner. Faulchions, ſpears,
And ſhields are all encumber'd; till the Greeks
Had forc'd a paſſage to the yielding foe.
Then Medon's arm is felt. The dreadful boar,
Wide-waſting once the Calydonian fields, 685
In fury breaking from his gloomy lair,
Rang'd with leſs havoc through unguarded folds,
Than Medon, ſweeping down the glitt'ring files,
So vainly ſtyl'd immortal. From the cliff
Divine Meliſſa, and Laconia's king 690
Enjoy the glories of Oileus' ſon.
Fierce Alpheus too, returning from his chace,
Joins in the ſlaughter. Ev'ry Perſian falls.

To him the Locrian chief. Brave Spartan, thanks.
Through thee my purpoſe is accompliſh'd full. 695

My

My phalanx here with levell'd rows of ſpears
Shall guard the ſhatter'd buſhes. Come what may
From Aſia's camp, th' aſſailant, flank'd and driv'n
Down yonder ſlope, ſhall periſh. Gods of Greece,
You ſhall behold your fanes profuſely deck'd 700
In ſplendid off'rings from Barbarian ſpoils,
Won by your free-born ſupp'icants this day.

THIS ſaid, he forms his ranks. Their threat'ning points
Gleam through the thicket, whence the ſhiv'ring foes
Avert their ſight, like paſſengers diſmay'd, 705
Who on their courſe by Nile's portentous banks
Deſcry in ambuſh of perfidious reeds
The crocodile's fell teeth. Contiguous lay
Thermopylæ. Dieneces ſecur'd
The narrow mouth. Two lines the Spartans ſhew'd 710
One tow'rds the plain obſerv'd the Perſian camp;
One, led by Agis, fac'd th' interior paſs.

NOT yet diſcourag'd, Hyperanthes ſtrives
The ſcatter'd hoſt to rally. He exhorts,
Entreats, at length indignant thus exclaims. 715

DEGEN'RATE Perſians! to ſepulchral duſt
Could breath return, your fathers from the tomb
Would utter groans. Inglorious, do you leave
Behind you Perſia's ſtandard to adorn
Some Grecian temple? Can your ſplendid cars, 720
Voluptuous couches, and delicious boards,
Your gold, your gems, ye ſatraps, be preſerv'd
By cowardice and flight? The eunuch ſlave
Will ſcorn ſuch lords, your women loath your beds.

Few hear him, fewer follow; while the fight 725
His unabating courage oft renews,
As oft repuls'd with danger: till, by all
Deserted, mixing in the gen'ral rout,
He yields to fortune, and regains the camp.
In short advances thus the dying tide 730
Beats for a while against the shelving strand,
Still by degrees retiring, and at last
Within the bosom of the main subsides.

Though Hyperanthes from the fight was driv'n
Close to the mountain, whose indented side 735
There gave the widen'd pass an ample space
For numbers to embattle, still his post
Bold Intaphernes underneath a cliff
Against the firm Platæan line maintain'd.
On him look'd down Leonidas like death, 740
When from his iron cavern call'd by Jove,
He stands gigantic on a mountain's head,
Whence he commands th' affrighted earth to quake,
And, crags and forests in his direful grasp
High-wielding, dashes on a town below, 745
Whose deeds of black impiety provoke
The long-enduring gods. Around the verge
Of Oeta, curving to a crescent's shape,
The marbles, timbers, fragments lay amass'd.
The Helots, peasants, mariners attend 750
In order nigh Leonidas. They watch
His look. He gives the signal. Rous'd at once
The force, the skill, activity and zeal

Of

Of thouſands are combin'd. Down ruſh the piles.
Trees, roll'd on trees, with mingled rock deſcend, 755
Unintermitted ruin. Loud reſound
The hollow trunks againſt the mountain's ſide.
Swift bounds each craggy maſs. The foes below
Look up aghaſt, in horror ſhrink and die.
Whole troops, o'erwhelm'd beneath th' enormous load,
Lie hid and loſt, as never they had known 761
A name or being. Intaphernes clad
In regal ſplendor, progeny of kings,
Who rul'd Damaſcus, and the Syrian palms,
Here ſlept for ever. Thouſands of his train 765
In that broad ſpace the ruins had not reach'd.
Back to their camp a paſſage they attempt
Through Lacedæmon's line. Them Agis ſtopp'd.
Before his powerful arm Pandates fell.
Soſarmes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd 770
His youthful ſteel in blood. The mightier ſpear
Of Maron pierc'd battalions, and enlarg'd
The track of ſlaughter. Backward turn'd the rout,
Nor found a milder fate. Th' unweary'd ſwords
Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon, 775
Who from the hill are wheeling on their flank,
Still flaſh tremendous. To the ſhore they fly,
At once envelop'd by ſucceſſive bands
Of diff'rent Grecians. From the gulph profound
Perdition here inevitable frowns, 780
While there, encircled by a grove of ſpears,
They ſtand devoted hecatombs to Mars.

Now

Now not a moment's interval delays
Their gen'ral doom ; but down the Malian ſteep
Prone are they hurry'd to th' expanded arms 785
Of horror, riſing from the oozy deep,
And graſping all their numbers, as they fall.
The dire confuſion like a ſtorm invades
The chafing ſurge. Whole troops Bellona rolls
In one vaſt ruin from the craggy ridge. 790
O'er all their arms, their enſigns, deep-engulph'd,
With hideous roar the waves for ever cloſe.

THE END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE NINTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Night coming on, the Grecians retire to their tents. A guard is placed on the Phocian wall under the command of Agis. He admits into the camp a lady, accompanied by a single slave, and conducts them to Leonidas; when she discovers herself to be Ariana, sister of Xerxes and Hyperanthes, and sues for the body of Teribazus; which being found among the slain, she kills herself upon it. The slave who attended her proves to be Polydorus, brother to Alpheus and Maron, and who had been formerly carried into captivity by a Phœnician pirate. He relates, before an assembly of the chiefs, a message from Demaratus to the Spartans, which discloses the treachery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dieneces with a party of Lacedæmonians to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been intrusted. In the mean time Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.

IN ſable veſture, ſpangled o'er with ſtars,
The night aſſum'd her throne. Recall'd from war,
Their toil, protracted long, the Greeks forget,
Diſſolv'd in ſilent ſlumber, all, but thoſe,
Who watch th' uncertain perils of the dark, 5
A hundred warriors. Agis was their chief.
High on the wall intent the hero ſat.
Freſh winds acroſs the undulating bay
From Aſia's hoſt the various din convey'd
In one deep murmur, ſwelling on his ear. 10
When by the ſound of footſteps down the paſs
Alarm'd, he calls aloud. What feet are theſe,
Which beat the echoing pavement of the rock?
Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate?

A VOICE reply'd. No enemies we come, 15
But crave admittance in an humble tone.

THE Spartan anſwers. Through the midnight ſhade
What purpoſe draws your wand'ring ſteps abroad?

To whom the ſtranger. We are friends to Greece.
Through thy aſſiſtance we implore acceſs 20
To Lacedæmon's king. The cautious Greek
Still heſitates; when muſically ſweet
A tender voice his wond'ring ear allures.

O GEN'ROUS warrior, liſten to the pray'r
Of one diſtreſs'd, whom grief alone hath led 25
Through midnight ſhades to theſe victorious tents,
A wretched woman, innocent of fraud.

THE chief, deſcending, thro' th' unfolded gates
Upheld a flaming torch. The light diſclos'd
One firſt in ſervile garments. Near his ſide 30

A woman graceful and majeftic ftood,
Not with an afpect rivalling the pow'r
Of fatal Helen, or th' infnaring charms
Of love's foft queen, but fuch as far furpafs'd
Whate'er the lilly, blending with the rofe, 35
Spreads on the cheek of beauty foon to fade;
Such as exprefs'd a mind by wifdom rul'd,
By fweetnefs temper'd; virtue's pureft light
Illumining the countenance divine:
Yet could not foften rig'rous fate, nor charm 40
Malignant fortune to revere the good;
Which oft with anguifh rends a fpotlefs heart,
And oft affociates wifdom with defpair.
In courteous phrafe began the chief humane.

EXALTED fair, whofe form adorns the night, 45
Forbear to blame the vigilance of war.
My flow compliance to the rigid laws
Of Mars impute. In me no longer paufe
Shall from the prefence of our king withhold
This thy apparent dignity and worth. 50

HERE ending, he conducts her. At the call
Of his lov'd brother from his couch arofe
Leonidas. In wonder he furvey'd
Th' illuftrious virgin, whom his prefence aw'd.
Her eye fubmiffive to the ground declin'd, 55
In veneration of the godlike man.
His mien, his voice her anxious dread difpel,
Benevolent and hofpitable thus.

THY looks, fair ftranger, amiable and great,
A mind delineate, which from all commands 60

Supreme regard. Relate, thou noble dame,
By what relentleſs deſtiny compell'd,
Thy tender feet the paths of darkneſs tread;
Rehearſe th' afflictions, whence thy virtue mourns.

On her wan cheek a ſudden bluſh aroſe 65
Like day, firſt dawning on the twilight pale;
When, wrapt in grief, theſe words a paſſage found.

If to be moſt unhappy, and to know
That hope is irrecoverably fled;
If to be great and wretched may deſerve 70
Commiſeration from the brave; behold,
Thou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,
Behold, deſcended from Darius' loins,
Th' afflicted Ariana; and my pray'r
Accept with pity, nor my tears diſdain. 75
Firſt, that I lov'd the beſt of human race,
Heroic, wiſe, adorn'd by ev'ry art,
Of ſhame unconſcious doth my heart reveal.
This day, in Grecian arms conſpicuous clad,
He fought, he fell. A paſſion, long conceal'd, 80
For me, alas! within my brother's arms
His dying breath reſigning, he diſclos'd.
Oh! I will ſtay my ſorrows! will forbid
My eyes to ſtream before thee, and my breaſt,
O'erwhelm'd by anguiſh, will from ſighs reſtrain! 85
For why ſhould thy humanity be griev'd
At my diſtreſs, why learn from me to mourn
The lot of mortals, doom'd to pain and woe?
Hear then, O king, and grant my ſole requeſt,
To ſeek his body in the heaps of ſlain. 90

Thus

Thus to the hero ſu'd the royal maid,
Reſembling Ceres in majeſtic woe,
When ſupplicating Jove from Stygian gloom,
And Pluto's black embraces to redeem
Her lov'd and loſt Proſerpina. A while 95
On Ariana fixing ſtedfaſt eyes,
Theſe tender thoughts Leonidas recall'd.

Such are thy ſorrows, O for ever dear,
Who now at Lacedæmon doſt deplore
My everlaſting abſence. Then aſide 100
He turn'd and ſigh'd. Recov'ring, he addreſs'd
His brother. Moſt beneficent of men,
Attend, aſſiſt this princeſs. Night retires
Before the purple-winged morn. A band
Is call'd. The well-remember'd ſpot they find, 105
Where Teribazus from his dying hand
Dropt in their ſight his formidable ſword.
Soon from beneath a pile of Aſians dead
They [illegible] the hero, by his armour known.

Then, Ariana, what tranſcending pangs 110
Were thine! what horrors! In thy tender breaſt
Love ſtill was mightieſt. On the boſom cold
Of Teribazus, grief-diſtracted maid,
Thy beauteous limbs were thrown. Thy ſnowy hue
The clotted gore disfigur'd. On his wounds 115
Looſe flow'd thy hair, and, bubbling from thy eyes,
Impetuous ſorrow lav'd th' empurpled clay.
When forth in groans theſe lamentations broke.

O torn for ever from theſe weeping eyes!
Thou, who deſpairing to obtain a heart, 120

Which then moſt lov'd thee, didſt untimely yield
Thy life to fate's inevitable dart
For her, who now in agony reveals
Her tender paſſion, who repeats her vows
To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own 125
Unites thy cheek inſenſible and cold.
Alas! do thoſe unmoving, ghaſtly orbs
Perceive my guſhing ſorrow? Can that heart
At my complaint diſſolve the ice of death?
To ſhare my ſuff'rings? Never, never more 130
Shall Ariana bend a liſt'ning ear
To thy enchanting eloquence, nor feaſt
Her mind on wiſdom from thy copious tongue!
Oh! bitter, inſurmountable diſtreſs!

She could no more Invincible deſpair 135
Suppreſs'd all utt'rance. As a marble form,
Fix'd on the ſolemn ſepulchre, inclines
The ſilent head in imitated woe
O'er ſome dead hero, whom his country lov'd,
Entranc'd by anguiſh, o'er the breathleſs clay 140
So hung the princeſs. On the gory breach,
Whence life had iſſued by the fatal blow,
Mute for a ſpace and motionleſs ſhe gaz'd;
When thus in accents firm. Imperial pomp,
Foe to my quiet, take my laſt farewel. 145
There is a ſtate, where only virtue holds
The rank ſupreme. My Teribazus there
From his high order muſt deſcend to mine.

Then with no trembling hand, no change of look,
She drew a poniard, which her garment veil'd; 150

And

And inſtant ſheathing in her heart the blade,
On her ſlain lover ſilent ſunk in death.
The unexpected ſtroke prevents the care
Of Agis, pierc'd by horror and diſtreſs,
Like one, who, ſtanding on a ſtormy beach, 155
Beholds a found'ring veſſel, by the deep
At once engulph'd; his pity feels and mourns,
Depriv'd of pow'r to ſave: ſo Agis view'd
The proſtrate pair. He dropp'd a tear, and thus.

Oh! much lamented! Heavy on your heads 160
Hath evil fall'n, which o'er your pale remains
Commands this ſorrow from a ſtranger's eye.
Illuſtrious ruins! May the grave impart
That peace which life deny'd! And now receive
This pious office from a hand unknown. 165

He ſpake, unclaſping from his ſhoulders broad
His ample robe. He ſtrew'd the waving folds
O'er each wan viſage, turning then, addreſs'd
The ſlave, in mute dejection ſtanding near.

Thou, who attendant on this hapleſs fair, 170
Haſt view'd this dreadful ſpectacle, return.
Theſe bleeding reliques bear to Perſia's king,
Thou with four captives, whom I free from bonds.

Art thou a Spartan? interrupts the ſlave.
Doſt thou command me to return, and pine 175
In climes unbleſs'd by liberty, or laws?
Grant me to ſee Leonidas. Alone
Let him decide, if wretched, as I ſeem,
I may not claim protection from this camp.

Whoe'er

Whoe'er thou art, rejoins the chief, amaz'd, 180
But not offended, thy ignoble garb
Conceal'd a ſpirit, which I now revere.
Thy countenance demands a better lot,
Than I, a ſtranger to thy hidden worth,
Unconſcious offer'd. Freedom dwells in Greece, 185
Humanity and juſtice. Thou ſhalt ſee
Leonidas their guardian. To the king
He leads him ſtraight, preſents him in theſe words.

In mind ſuperior to the baſe attire,
Which marks his limbs with ſhame, a ſtranger comes, 190
Who thy protection claims. The ſlave ſubjoins.

I stand thy ſuppliant now. Thou ſoon ſhalt learn,
If I deſerve thy favour. I requeſt
To meet th' aſſembled chieftains of this hoſt.
Oh! I am fraught with tidings, which import 195
The weal of ev'ry Grecian. Agis ſwift,
Appointed by Leonidas, convenes
The diff'rent leaders. To the tent they ſpeed.
Before them call'd, the ſtranger thus began.

O Alpheus! Maron! Hither turn your ſight, 200
And know your brother. From their ſeats they ſtart.
From either breaks in ecſtaſy the name
Of Polydorus. To his dear embrace
Each fondly ſtrives to ruſh; but he withſtands:
While down his cheek a flood of anguiſh pours 205
From his dejected eyes, in torture bent
On that vile garb, diſhonouring his form.
At length theſe accents, intermix'd with groans,
A paſſage found, while mute attention gaz'd.

You firſt ſhould know, if this unhappy ſlave 210
Yet merits your embraces. Then approach'd
Leonidas. Before him all recede,
Ev'n Alpheus' ſelf, and yields his brother's hand,
Which in his own the regal hero preſs'd.
Still Polydorus on his gloomy front 215
Repugnance ſtern to conſolation bore:
When thus the king with majeſty benign.

Lo! ev'ry heart is open to thy worth.
Injurious fortune, and enfeebling time
By ſervitude and grief ſeverely try 220
A lib'ral ſpirit. Try'd, but not ſubdu'd,
Do thou appear. Whatever be our lot
Is heav'n's appointment. Patience beſt becomes
The citizen and ſoldier. Let the ſight
Of friends and brethren diſſipate thy gloom. 225

Of men the gentleſt, Agis too advanc'd,
Who with increas'd humanity began.
Now with thy native liberty ſecure,
Smile on thy paſs'd affliction, and relate,
What chance reſtores thy merit to the arms 230
Of friends and kindred. Polydorus then.

I was a Spartan. When my tender prime
On manhood border'd, from Laconia's ſhores
Snatch'd by Phœnician pirates, I was ſold
A ſlave, by Hyperanthes bought and giv'n 235
To Ariana. Gracious was her hand.
But I remain'd a bondman, ſtill eſtrang'd
From Lacedæmon. Demaratus oft
In friendly ſorrow would my lot deplore;
Nor leſs his own ill-fated virtue mourn'd, 240

Loſt

Loſt to his country in a ſervile court,
The centre of corruption; where in ſmiles
Are painted envy, treachery and hate
With rankling malice; where alone ſincere
The diſſolute ſeek no diſguiſe: where thoſe, 245
Poſſeſſing all a monarch can beſtow,
Are far leſs happy than the meaneſt heir
To freedom, far more groveling than the ſlave
Who ſerves their cruel pride. Yet here the ſun
Ten times his yearly circle hath renew'd, 250
Since Polydorus hath in bondage groan'd.
My bloom is paſs'd, or, pining in deſpair,
Untimely wither'd. I at laſt return
A meſſenger of fate, who tidings bear
Of deſolation. Here he paus'd in grief 255
Redoubled; when Leonidas. Proceed:
Should from thy lips inevitable death
To all be threaten'd, thou art heard by none,
Whoſe dauntleſs hearts can entertain a thought,
But how to fall the nobleſt. Thus the king. 260
The reſt in ſpeechleſs expectation wait.
Such was the ſolemn ſilence, which o'erſpread
The ſhrine of Ammon, or Dodona's ſhades,
When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove
Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long 265
Suſpends the council, but reſumes his tale.

As I this night accompany'd the ſteps
Of Ariana, near the paſs we ſaw
A reſtleſs form, now traverſing the way,
Now, as a ſtatue, rivetted by doubt, 270

Then on a sudden starting to renew
An eager pace. As nearer we approach'd,
He by the moon, which glimmer'd on our heads,
Descry'd us. Straight advancing, whither bent
Our midnight course, he ask'd. I knew the voice 275
Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd
The venerable exile, and reply'd.
Laconia's camp we seek. Demand no more.
Farewel. He wept. Be heav'n thy guide, he said,
Thrice happy Polydorus. Thou again 280
May'st visit Sparta, to these eyes deny'd.
Soon as arriv'd at those triumphant tents,
Say to the Spartans from their exil'd king,
Altho' their blind credulity depriv'd
The wretched Demaratus of his home; 285
From ev'ry joy secluded, from his wife,
His offspring torn, his countrymen and friends,
Him from his virtue they could ne'er divide.
Say, that ev'n here, where all are kings, or slaves,
Amid the riot of flagitious courts 290
Not quite extinct his Spartan spirit glows,
Tho' grief hath dimm'd its fires. Rememb'ring this,
Report, that newly to the Persian host
Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
Who, as a spy, the Grecian tents had sought. 295
He to the monarch magnify'd his art,
Which by delusive eloquence had wrought
The Greeks to such despair, that ev'ry band
To Persia's sov'reign standard would have bow'd;
Had not the spirit of a single chief, 300

By

By fear unconquer'd, and on death refolv'd,
Reftor'd their valour: therefore would the king
Truft to his guidance a felected force,
They foon fhould pierce th' unguarded bounds of Greece
Thro' a neglected aperture above, 305
Where no Leonidas fhould bar their way:
Mean time by him the treach'rous Thebans fent
Affurance of their aid. Th' affenting prince
At once decreed two myriads to advance
With Hyperanthes. Ev'ry lord befides, 310
Whom youth, or courage, or ambition warm,
Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attend
From all the nations with a rival zeal
To enter Greece the foremoft. In a figh
He clos'd—like me. Tremendous from his feat 315
Uprofe Diomedon. His eyes were flames!
When fwift on trembling Anaxander broke
Thefe ireful accents on his livid lips.

YET ere we fall, O traitor, fhall this arm
To hell's avenging furies fink thy head. 320

ALL now is tumult. Ev'ry bofom fwells
With wrath untam'd and vengeance. Half unfheath'd
Th' impetuous faulchion of Platæa flames.
But, as the Colchian forcerefs, renown'd
In legends old, or Circé, when they fram'd 325
A potent fpell, to fmoothnefs charm'd the main,
And lull'd Æolian rage by myftic fong;
Till not a billow heav'd againft the fhore,
Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephyr breath'd
The lighteft whifper thro' the magic air: 330

So,

So, when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,
Confuſion liſtens; ire in ſilent awe
Subſides. Withhold this raſhneſs, cries the king.
To proof of guilt let puniſhment ſucceed.
Not yet Barbarian ſhouts our camp alarm. 335
We ſtill have time for vengeance, time to know,
If menac'd ruin we may yet repel,
Or how moſt glorious periſh. Next aroſe
Dieneces, and thus th' experienc'd man.

Ere they ſurmount our fences, Xerxes' troops 340
Muſt learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly.
The ſpears of Phocis guard that ſecret paſs.
To them let inſtant meſſengers depart,
And note the hoſtile progreſs. Alpheus here.

Leonidas, behold, my willing feet 345
Shall to the Phocians bear thy high commands;
Shall climb the hill to watch th' approaching foe.

Thou active ſon of valour, quick returns
[illegible] Lacedæmon, in my thoughts
For ever preſent, when the public weal 350
Requires the ſwift, the vigilant and bold.
Go, climb, ſurmount the rock's aerial height.
Obſerve the hoſtile march A Spartan band,
Dieneces, provide. Thyſelf conduct
Their ſpeedy ſuccour to our Phocian friends. 355

The council riſes. For his courſe prepar'd,
While day, declining, prompts his eager feet,
O Polydorus, Alpheus thus in haſte,
Long loſt, and late recover'd, we muſt part
Again, perhaps for ever. Thou return 360

To kiſs the ſacred ſoil, which gave thee birth,
And calls thee back to freedom. Brother dear,
I ſhould have ſighs to give thee—but farewel.
My country chides me, loit'ring in thy arms.

THIS ſaid, he darts along, nor looks behind, 365
When Polydorus anſwers. Alpheus, no.
I have the marks of bondage to eraſe.
My blood muſt waſh the ſhameful ſtain away.

WE have a father, Maron interpos'd.
Thy unexpected preſence will revive 370
His heavy age, now childleſs and forlorn.

To him the brother with a gloomy frown.
Ill ſhould I comfort others. View theſe eyes.
Faint is their light; and vaniſh'd was my bloom
Before its hour of ripeneſs. In my breaſt 375
Grief will retain a manſion, nor by time
Be diſpoſſeſs'd. Unceaſing ſhall my ſoul
Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth,
In ſlavery exhauſted. Life to me
Hath loſt its ſavour. Then in ſullen woe 380
His head declines. His brother pleads in vain.

NOW in his view Dieneces appear'd
With Sparta's band. Immoveable his eyes
On them he fix'd, revolving theſe dark thoughts.

I TOO like them from Lacedæmon ſpring, 385
Like them inſtructed once to poiſe the ſpear,
To lift the pond'rous ſhield. Ill-deſtin'd wretch!
Thy arm is grown enervate, and would ſink
Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant fates!
Who have compell'd my free-born hand to change 390

The

The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds ;
Would you compenſate for my chains, my ſhame,
My ten years anguiſh, and the fell deſpair,
Which on my youth have prey'd ; relenting once,
Grant I may bear my buckler to the field, 395
And, known a Spartan, ſeek the ſhades below.

WHY to be known a Spartan muſt thou ſeek
The ſhades below ? impatient Maron ſpake.
Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds.
Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth. 400
Live, and perform the duties which become
A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow
Frowns gloomy, ſtill unyielding. He, who leads
Our band, all fathers of a noble race,
Will ne'er permit thy barren day to cloſe 405
Without an offspring to uphold the ſtate.

HE will, replies the brother in a glow,
Prevailing o'er the paleneſs of his cheek,
He will permit me to compleat by death
The meaſure of my duty ; will permit 410
Me to achieve a ſervice, which no hand
But mine can render, to adorn his fall
With double luſtre, ſtrike the barb'rous foe
With endleſs terror, and avenge the ſhame
Of an enſlav'd Laconian. Cloſing here 415
His words myſterious, quick he turn'd away
To find the tent of Agis. There his hand
In grateful ſorrow miniſter'd her aid ;
While the humane, the hoſpitable care
Of Agis gently by her lover's corſe 420

On one ſad bier the pallid beauties laid
Of Ariana. He from bondage freed
Four eaſtern captives, whom his gen'rous arm
That day had ſpar'd in battle; then began
This ſolemn charge. You, Perſians, whom my ſword 425
Acquir'd in war, unranſom'd ſhall depart.
To you I render freedom, which you ſought
To wreſt from me. One recompence I aſk,
And one alone. Tranſport to Aſia's camp
This bleeding princeſs. Bid the Perſian king 430
Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom.
Then ſay, th' all-judging pow'rs have thus ordain'd.
Thou, whoſe ambition o'er the groaning earth
Leads deſolation; o'er the nations ſpreads
Calamity and tears; thou firſt ſhalt mourn, 435
And thro' thy houſe deſtruction firſt ſhall range.

Dismiss'd, they gain the rampart, where on guard
Was Dithyrambus poſted. He perceiv'd
The mournful bier approach. To him the fate
Of Ariana was already told. 440
He met the captives, with a moiſten'd eye,
Full bent on Teribazus, ſigh'd and ſpake.

O that, aſſuming with thoſe Grecian arms
A Grecian ſpirit, thou in ſcorn hadſt look'd
On princes! Worth like thine, from ſlaviſh courts 445
Withdrawn, had ne'er been waſted to ſupport
A king's injuſtice. Then a gentler lot
Had bleſs'd thy life. or, dying, thou hadſt known,
How ſweet is death for liberty. A Greek
Affords theſe friendly wiſhes, tho' his head 450

Had

Had loſt the honours gather'd from thy fall,
When fortune favour'd, or propitious Jove
Smil'd on the better cauſe. Ill-fated pair,
Whom in compaſſion's pureſt dew I lave,
But that my hand infix'd the deathful wound, 455
And muſt be grievous to your loathing ſhades,
From all the neighb'ring vallies would I cull
Their faireſt growth, to ſtrew your hearſe with flow'rs.
Yet, O accept theſe tears and pious pray'rs!
May peace ſurround your aſhes! May your ſhades 460
Paſs o'er the ſilent pool to happier ſeats!

He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,
And ſlowly down Thermopylæ proceed.

THE END OF THE NINTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE TENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Medon convenes the Locrian commanders, and harangues them; repairs at midnight to his sister Melissa in the temple, and receives from her the first intelligence, that the Persians were in actual possession of the upper Streights, which had been abandoned by the Phocians. Melibœus brings her tidings of her father's death. She strictly enjoins her brother to preserve his life by a timely retreat, and recommends the enforcement of her advice to the prudence and zeal of Melibœus. In the morning the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana are brought into the presence of Xerxes, soon after a report had reached the camp that great part of his navy was shipwrecked. The Persian monarch, quite dispirited, is persuaded by Argestes to send an ambassador to the Spartan king. Argestes himself is deputed, who, after revealing his embassy in secret to Leonidas, is by him led before the whole army, and there receives his answer. Alpheus returns, and declares, that the enemy was master of the hills, and would arrive at Thermopylæ the next morning; upon which Leonidas offers to send away all the troops except his three hundred Spartans; but Diomedon, Demophilus, Dithyrambus, and Megistias refuse to depart: then to relieve the perplexity of Medon on this occasion, he transfers to him the supreme command, dismisses Argestes, orders the companions of his own fate to be ready in arms by sunset, and retires to his pavilion.

THE

THE Grecian leaders, from the counfel ris'n,
Among the troops difperfing, by their words,
Their looks undaunted warm the coldeft heart
Againft new dangers threat'ning. To his tent
The Locrian captains Medon fwift convenes, 5
Exhorting thus O long-approv'd my friends,
You, who have feen my father in the field
Triumphant, bold affiftants of my arm
In labours not inglorious, who this day
Have rais'd frefh trophies, be prepar'd. If help 10
Be further wanted in the Phocian camp,
You will the next be fummon'd. Locris lies
To ravage firft expos'd. Your ancient fane,
Your goddeffes, your prieftefs half-ador'd,
The daughter of Oïleus, from your fwords 15
Protection claim againft an impious foe.

ALL anxious for Meliffa, he difmifs'd
Th' applauding vet'rans; to the facred cave
Then haften'd. Under heav'n's night-fhaded cope
He mus'd. Meliffa in her holy place 20
How to approach with inaufpicious fteps,
How to accoft his penfive mind revolv'd:
When Mycon, pious vaffal of the fane,
Defcending thro' the cavern, at the fight
Of Medon ftopp'd, and thus. Thy prefence, lord, 25
The prieftefs calls. To Lacedæmon's king
I bear a meffage, fuff'ring no delay.

HE quits the chief, whofe rapid feet afcend,
Soon ent'ring, where the pedeftal difplays
Thy form, Calliopé fublime. The lyre, 30

Whose accents immortality confer,
Thy fingers seem to wake. On either side,
The snowy gloss of Parian marble shews
Four of thy sisters thro' surrounding shade.
Before each image is a virgin plac'd. 35
Before each virgin dimly burns a lamp,
Whose livid spires just temper with a gleam
The dead obscurity of night. Apart
The priestess thoughtful sits. Thus Medon breaks
The solemn silence. Anxious for thy state, 40
Without a summons to thy pure abode
I was approaching. Deities, who know
The present, past and future, let my lips,
Unblam'd, have utt'rance. Thou, my sister, hear.
Thy breast let wisdom strengthen. Impious foes 45
Thro' Oeta now are passing. She replies.

Are passing, brother! They, alas! are pass'd,
Are in possession of the upper Streight.
Hear in thy turn. A dire narration hear.
A favour'd goat, conductor of my herd, 50
Stray'd to a dale, whose outlet is the post
To Phocians left, and penetrates to Greece.
Him Mycon following, by a hostile band,
Light-arm'd forerunners of a num'rous host,
Was seiz'd. By fear of menac'd torments forc'd, 55
He shew'd a passage up that mountain's side,
Whose length of wood o'ershades the Phocian land.
To dry and sapless trunks in diff'rent parts
Fire, by the Persians artfully apply'd,
Soon grew to flames. This done, the troop return'd, 60

Detaining

Detaining Mycon. Now the mountain blaz'd.
The Phocians, ill-commanded, left their poſt,
Alarm'd, confus'd. More diſtant ground they choſe.
In blind deluſion forming there, they ſpread
Their ineffectual banners to repel 65
Imagin'd peril from thoſe fraudful lights,
By ſtratagem prepar'd. A real foe
Mean time ſecur'd the undefended paſs.
This Mycon ſaw. Eſcaping thence to me,
He by my orders haſtens to inform 70
Leonidas. She paus'd. Like one, who ſees
The forked light'ning into ſhivers rive
A knotted oak, or crumble tow'rs to duſt,
Aghaſt was Medon; then, recov'ring, ſpake.

THOU boaſted glory of th' Oïlean houſe, 75
If e'er thy brother bow'd in rev'rence due
To thy ſuperior virtues, let his voice
Be now regarded. From th' endanger'd fane,
My ſiſter, fly. Whatever be my lot,
A troop ſelect of Locrians ſhall tranſport 80
Thy ſacred perſon where thy will ordains.

THINK not of me, returns the dame. To Greece
Direct thy zeal. My peaſants are conven'd,
That by their labour, when the fatal hour
Requires, with maſſy fragments I may bar 85
That cave to human entrance. Beſt belov'd
Of brothers, now a ſerious ear incline.
A while in Greece to fortune's wanton gale
His golden banner ſhall the Perſian king,
Deluded, wave. Leonidas, by death 90

Preſerving Sparta, will his ſpirit leave
To blaſt the glitt'ring pageant. Medon, live
To ſhare that glory. Thee to periſh here
No law, no oracle enjoins. To die,
Uncall'd, is blameful. Let thy pious hand 95
Secure Oïleus from Barbarian force.
To Sparta mindful of her noble hoſt
Entruſt his rev'rend head. Th' aſſembled hinds,
Youths, maidens, wives with nurſelings at their breaſts,
Around her now in conſternation ſtood, 100
The women weeping, mute, aghaſt the men.
To them ſhe turns. You never, faithful race,
Your prieſteſs ſhall forſake. Meliſſa here,
Deſpairing never of the public weal,
For better days in ſolitude ſhall wait, 105
Shall chear your ſadneſs. My prophetic ſoul
Sees thro' time's cloud the liberty of Greece
More ſtable, more effulgent. In his blood
Leonidas cements th' unſhaken baſe
Of that ſtrong tow'r which Athens ſhall exalt 110
To caſt a ſhadow o'er the eaſtern world.

This utter'd, tow'rd the temple's inmoſt ſeat
Of ſanctity her ſolemn ſtep ſhe bends,
Devout, enraptur'd. In their dark'ning lamps
The pallid flames are fainting. Dim thro' miſts 115
The morning peeps. An awful ſilence reigns.
While Medon penſive from the fane deſcends,
But inſtant re-appears. Behind him cloſe
Treads Melibœus, thro' the cavern's mouth
Aſcending pale in aſpect, not unlike 120

What

What legends tell of ſpectres, by the force
Of necromantic ſorcery conſtrain'd;
Thro' earth's dark bowels, which the ſpell disjoin'd,
They from death's manſion in reluctant ſloth
Roſe to divulge the ſecrets of their graves, 125
Or myſteries of fate. His cheerful brow,
O'erclouded, paleneſs on his healthful cheek,
A dull, unwonted heavineſs of pace
Portend diſaſt'rous tidings. Medon ſpake.

Turn, holy ſiſter. By the gods belov'd, 130
May they ſuſtain thee in this mournful hour.
Our father, good Oïleus is no more.
Rehearſe thy tidings, ſwain. He takes the word.

Thou waſt not preſent, when his mind, outſtretch'd
By zeal for Greece, tranſported by his joy 135
To entertain Leonidas, refus'd
Due reſt. Old age his ardour had forgot,
To his laſt waking moment with his gueſt
In rapt'rous talk redundant. He at laſt,
Compos'd and ſmiling in th' embrace of ſleep, 140
To Pan's protection at the iſland fane
Was left. He wak'd no more. The fatal news,
To you diſcover'd, from the chiefs I hide.

Melissa heard, inclin'd her forehead low
Before th' inſculptur'd deities. A ſigh 145
Broke from her heart, theſe accents from her lips.

The full of days and honours thro' the gate
Of painleſs ſlumber is retir'd. His tomb
Shall ſtand among his fathers in the ſhade
Of his own trophies. Placid were his days, 150

Which flow'd thro' bleſſings. As a river pure,
Whoſe ſides are flow'ry, and whoſe meadows fair,
Meets in his courſe a ſubterranean void;
There dips his ſilver head, again to riſe,
And, riſing, glide thro' flow'rs and meadows new: 155
So ſhall Oïleus in thoſe happier fields,
Where never tempeſts roar, nor humid clouds
In miſts diſſolve, nor white-deſcending flakes
Of winter violate th' eternal green;
Where never gloom of trouble ſhakes the mind, 160
Nor guſt of paſſion heaves the quiet breaſt,
Nor dews of grief are ſprinkled. Thou art gone,
Hoſt of divine Leonidas on earth,
Art gone before him to prepare the feaſt,
Immortalizing virtue. Silent here, 165
Around her head ſhe wraps her hallow'd pall.
Her prudent virgins interpoſe a hymn,
Not in a plaintive, but majeſtic flow,
To which their fingers, ſweeping o'er the chords,
The lyre's full tone attemper. She unveils, 170
Then with a voice, a countenance compos'd.

Go, Medon, pillar of th' Oïlean houſe.
New cares, new duties claim thy precious life.
Perform the pious obſequies. Let tears,
Let groans be abſent from the ſacred duſt, 175
Which heav'n in life ſo favour'd, more in death.
A term of righteous days, an envy'd urn
Like his, for Medon is Meliſſa's pray'r.
Thou, Melibœus, cordial, high in rank
Among the prudent, warn and watch thy lord. 180
My benediction ſhall reward thy zeal.

SOOTH'D

Sooth'd by the bleffings of fuch perfect lips,
They both depart. And now the climbing fun
To Xerxes' tent difcover'd from afar
The Perfian captives with their mournful load. 185
Before them rumour thro' her fable trump
Breathes lamentation. Horror lends his voice
To fpread the tidings of difaftrous fate
Along Spercheos. As a vapour black,
Which, from the diftant, horizontal verge 190
Afcending, nearer ftill and nearer bends
To higher lands its progrefs, there condens'd,
Throws darknefs o'er the valleys, while the face
Of nature faddens round; fo ftep by ftep,
In motion flow th' advancing bier diffus'd 195
A folemn fadnefs o'er the camp. A hedge
Of trembling fpears on either hand is form'd.
Tears underneath his iron-pointed cone
The Sacian drops. The Cafpian favage feels
His heart tranfpierc'd, and wonders at the pain. 200
In Xerxes' prefence are the bodies plac'd,
Nor he forbids. His agitated breaft
All night had weigh'd againft his future hopes
His prefent loffes, his defeated ranks,
By myriads thinn'd, their multitude abafh'd, 205
His fleet thrice worfted, torn by ftorms, reduc'd
To half its number. When he flept, in dreams
He faw the haggard dead, which floated round
Th' adjoining ftrands. Difafters new their ghofts
In fullen frowns, in fhrill upbraidings bode. 210
Thus, ere the gory bier approach'd his eyes,

He in dejection had already loſt
His kingly pride, the parent of diſdain,
And cold indifference to human woes.
Not ev'n beſide his ſiſter's nobler corſe 215
Her humble lover could awake his ſcorn.
The captives told their piercing tale. He heard;
He felt a while compaſſion. But ere long
Thoſe traces vaniſh'd from the tyrant's breaſt.
His former gloom redoubles. For himſelf 220
His anxious boſom heaves, oppreſs'd by fear,
Leſt he with all his ſplendor ſhould be caſt
A prey to fortune. Thoughtful near the throne
Laconia's exile waits, to whom the king.

O DEMARATUS, what will fate ordain! 225
Lo! fortune turns againſt me. What ſhall check
Her further malice, when her daring ſtride
Invades my houſe with ravage, and profanes
The blood of great Darius. I have ſent
From my unguarded ſide the choſen band, 230
My braveſt chiefs to paſs the deſert hill;
Have to the conduct of a Malian ſpy
My hopes entruſted. May not there the Greeks
In oppoſition more tremendous ſtill,
More ruinous than yeſter ſun beheld, 235
Maintain their poſt invincible, renew
Their ſtony thunder in augmented rage,
And ſend whole quarries down the craggy ſteeps
Again to cruſh my army? Oh! unfold
Thy ſecret thoughts, nor hide the harſheſt truth. 240
Say, what remains to hope? The exile here.

Too

Too well, O monarch, do thy fears presage
What may befal thy army. If the Greeks,
Arrang'd within Thermopylæ, a pass
Accessible and practis'd, could repel 245
With such destruction their unnumber'd foes;
What scenes of havoc may untrodden paths,
Confin'd among the craggy hills, afford?

Lost in despair, the monarch silent sat.
Not less unmann'd than Xerxes, from his place 250
Up rose Argestes; but concealing fear,
These artful words deliver'd. If the king
Propitious wills to spare his faithful bands,
Nor spread at large the terrors of his pow'r;
More gentle means of conquest, than by arms, 255
Nor less secure may artifice supply.
Renown'd Darius, thy immortal sire,
Bright in the spoil of kingdoms, long in vain
The fields of proud Euphrates with his host
O'erspread. At length, confiding in the wiles 260
Of Zopyrus, the mighty prince subdu'd
The Babylonian ramparts. Who shall count
The thrones and states by stratagem o'erturn'd?
But if corruption join her pow'rful aid,
Not one can stand. What race of men possess 265
That probity, that wisdom, which the veil
Of craft shall never blind, nor proffer'd wealth,
Nor splendid pow'r seduce? O Xerxes, born
To more than mortal greatness, canst thou find
Thro' thy unbounded sway no dazzling gift, 270
Which may allure Leonidas? Dispel

The cloud of ſadneſs from thoſe ſacred eyes.
Great monarch, proffer to Laconia's chief,
What may thy own magnificence declare,
And win his friendſhip. O'er his native Greece 275
Inveſt him ſov'reign. Thus procure his ſword
For thy ſucceeding conqueſts. Xerxes here,
As from a trance awak'ning, ſwift replies.

Wise are thy dictates. Fly to Sparta's chief.
Argeſtes, fall before him. Bid him join 280
My arms, and reign o'er ev'ry Grecian ſtate.

He ſcarce had finiſh'd, when in haſte approach'd
Artuchus. Startled at the ghaſtly ſtage
Of death, that guardian of the Perſian fair
Thus in a groan. Thou deity malign, 285
O Arimanius, what a bitter draught
For my ſad lips thy cruelty hath mix'd!
Is this the flow'r of women, to my charge
So lately giv'n? Oh! princeſs, I have rang'd
The whole Sperchean valley, woods and caves, 290
In queſt of thee, found here a lifeleſs corſe.
Aſtoniſhment and horror lock my tongue.

Pride now reviving in the monarch's breaſt,
Diſpell'd his black deſpondency a while,
With gall more black effacing from his heart 295
Each merciful impreſſion. Stern he ſpake.

Remove her, ſatrap, to the female train.
Let them the due ſolemnities perform.
But never ſhe, by Mithra's light I ſwear,
Shall ſleep in Suſa with her kindred duſt, 300
Who by ignoble paſſion hath debas'd

The blood of Xerxes. Greece beheld her ſhame;
Let Greece behold her tomb. The low-born ſlave,
Who dar'd to Xerxes' ſiſter lift his hopes,
On ſome bare crag expoſe. The Spartan here. 305
My royal patron, let me ſpeak—and die,
If ſuch thy will. This cold, disfigur'd clay
Was late thy ſoldier, gallantly who fought,
Who nobly periſh'd, long the deareſt friend
Of Hyperanthes, hazarding his life 310
Now in thy cauſe. O'er Perſians doſt thou reign?
None more than Perſians venerate the brave.
Well hath he ſpoke, Artuchus firm ſubjoins.
But if the king his rigour will inflict
On this dead warrior—Heav'n, o'erlook the deed, 315
Nor on our heads accumulate freſh woes!
The ſhatter'd fleet, th' intimidated camp,
The band ſelect, thro' Oeta's dang'rous wilds
At this dread criſis ſtruggling, muſt obtain
Support from heav'n, or Aſia's glory falls. 320
Fell pride, recoiling at theſe awful words
In Xerxes' frozen boſom, yields to fear,
Reſuming there the ſway. He grants the corſe
To Demaratus. Forth Artuchus moves
Behind the bier, uplifted by his train. 325
Argestes, parted from his maſter's ſide,
Aſcends a car, and, ſpeeding o'er the beach,
Sees Artemiſia. She the aſhes pale
Of ſlaughter'd Carians on the pyre conſum'd,
Was then collecting for the fun'ral vaſe 330
In exclamation thus. My ſubjects, loſt

On earth, deſcend to happier climes below——
The fawning, daſtard counſellors, who left
Your worth deſerted in the hour of need,
May kites disfigure, may the wolf devour—— 335
Shade of my huſband, thou ſalute in ſmiles
Theſe gallant warriors, faithful once to thee,
Nor leſs to me. They tidings will report
Of Artemiſia to revive thy love——
May wretches like Argeſtes never claſp 340
Their wives, their offspring! Never greet their homes!
May their unbury'd limbs diſmiſs their ghoſts
To wail for ever on the banks of Styx!

THEN, turning tow'rd her ſon. Come, virtuous boy.
Let us tranſport theſe reliques of our friends 345
To yon tall bark, in pendent ſable clad.
They, if her keel be deſtin'd to return,
Shall in paternal monuments repoſe.
Let us embark. Till Xerxes ſhuts his ear
To falſe Argeſtes, in her veſſel hid, 350
Shall Artemiſia's gratitude lament
Her bounteous ſov'reign's fate. Leander, mark.
The Doric virtues are not eaſtern plants.
Them foſter ſtill within thy gen'rous breaſt,
But keep in covert from the blaze of courts; 355
Where flatt'ry's guile in oily words profuſe,
In action tardy, o'er th' ingenuous tongue,
The arm of valour, and the faithful heart
Will ever triumph. Yet my ſoul enjoys
Her own preſage, that deſtiny reſerves 360
An hour for my revenge. Concluding here,

She gains the fleet. Argeſtes ſweeps along
On rapid wheels from Artemiſia's view,
Like Night, protectreſs foul of heinous deeds,
With treaſon, rape and murder at her heel, 365
Before the eye of morn retreating ſwift,
To hide her loathſome viſage. Soon he reach'd
Thermopylæ; deſcending from his car,
Was led by Dithyrambus to the tent
Of Sparta's ruler. Since the fatal news 370
By Mycon late deliver'd, he apart
With Polydorus had conſulted long
On high attempts; and, now ſequeſter'd, ſat
To ruminate on vengeance. At his feet
Prone fell the ſatrap, and began. The will 375
Of Xerxes bends me proſtrate to the earth
Before thy preſence. Great and matchleſs chief,
Thus ſays the lord of Aſia. Join my arms;
Thy recompence is Greece. Her fruitful plains,
Her gen'rous ſteeds, her flocks, her num'rous towns, 380
Her ſons I render to thy ſov'reign hand.
And, O illuſtrious warrior, heed my words.
Think on the bliſs of royalty, the pomp
Of courts, their endleſs pleaſures, trains of ſlaves,
Who reſtleſs watch for thee, and thy delights: 385
Think on the glories of unrivall'd ſway.
Look on th' Ionic, on th' Æolian Greeks.
From them their phantom liberty is flown;
While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' power,
Some favour'd chief preſides; exalted ſtate, 390
Ne'er giv'n by envious freedom. On his head

He

He bears the gorgeous diadem; he sees
His equals once in adoration stoop
Beneath his footstool. What superior beams
Will from thy temples blaze, when gen'ral Greece, 395
In noblest states abounding, calls thee lord,
Thee only worthy. How will each rejoice
Around thy throne, and hail th' auspicious day,
When thou, distinguish'd by the Persian king,
Didst in thy sway consenting nations bless, 400
Didst calm the fury of unsparing war,
Which else had delug'd all with blood and flames.

Leonidas replies not, but commands
The Thespian youth, still watchful near the tent,
To summon all the Grecians. He obeys. 405
The king uprises from his seat, and bids
The Persian follow. He, amaz'd, attends,
Surrounded soon by each assembling band;
When thus at length the godlike Spartan spake,

Here, Persian, tell thy embassy. Repeat, 410
That to obtain my friendship Asia's prince
To me hath proffer'd sov'reignty o'er Greece.
Then view these bands, whose valour shall preserve
That Greece unconquer'd, which your king bestows,
Shall strew your bodies on her crimson'd plains: 415
The indignation, painted on their looks,
Their gen'rous scorn may answer for their chief.
Yet from Leonidas, thou wretch, inur'd
To vassalage and baseness, hear. The pomp,
The arts of pleasure in despotic courts 420
I spurn abhorrent. In a spotless heart

I look for pleaſure. I from righteous deeds
Derive my ſplendor. No adoring croud,
No purpled ſlaves, no mercenary ſpears
My ſtate embarraſs. I in Sparta rule 425
By laws, my rulers, with a guard unknown
To Xerxes, public confidence and love.
No pale ſuſpicion of th' empoiſon'd bowl,
Th' aſſaſſin's poniard, or provok'd revolt
Chace from my decent couch the peace, deny'd 430
To his reſplendent canopy. Thy king,
Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,
Dares not to meet my arm. Thee, trembling ſlave,
Whoſe embaſſy was treaſon, I deſpiſe,
And therefore ſpare. Diomedon ſubjoins. 435

Our marble temples theſe Barbarians waſte,
A crime leſs impious, than a bare attempt
Of ſacrilege on virtue. Grant my ſuit,
Thou living temple, where the goddeſs dwells.
To me conſign the caitiff. Soon the winds 440
Shall parch his limbs on Oeta's talleſt pine.

Amidst his fury ſuddenly return'd
The ſpeed of Alpheus. All, ſuſpended, fix'd
On him their eyes impatient. He began.

I am return'd a meſſenger of ill. 445
Cloſe to the paſſage, op'ning into Greece,
That poſt committed to the Phocian guard,
O'erhangs a buſhy cliff. A ſtation there
Behind the ſhrubs by dead of night I took,
Tho' not in darkneſs. Purple was the face 450
Of heav'n Beneath my feet the vallies glow'd.

A range

A range immenſe of wood-inveſted hills,
The boundaries of Greece, were clad in flames;
An act of froward chance, or crafty foes
To caſt diſmay. The crackling pines I heard; 455
Their branches ſparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.
In hillocks embers roſe. Embody'd fire,
As from unnumber'd furnaces, I ſaw
Mount high thro' vacant trunks of headleſs oaks,
Broad-bas'd, and dry with age. Barbarian helms, 460
Shields, javelins, ſabres, gleaming from below,
Full ſoon diſcover'd to my tortur'd ſight
The ſtreights in Perſia's pow'r. The Phocian chief,
Whate'er the cauſe, relinquiſhing his poſt,
Was to a neighb'ring eminence remov'd; 465
There, by the foe neglected, or contemn'd,
Remain'd in arms, and neither fled, nor fought.
I ſtaid for day-ſpring. Then the Perſians mov'd.
To-morrow's ſun will ſee their numbers here.

He ſaid no more. Unutterable fear 470
In horrid ſilence wraps the liſt'ning croud;
Aghaſt, confounded. Silent are the chiefs,
Who feel no terror; yet in wonder fix'd,
Thick-wedg'd, incloſe Leonidas around,
Who thus in calmeſt elocution ſpake. 475

I now behold the oracle fulfill'd.
Then art thou near, thou glorious, ſacred hour,
Which ſhall my country's liberty ſecure.
Thrice hail! thou ſolemn period. Thee the tongues
Of virtue, fame and freedom ſhall proclaim, 480
Shall celebrate in ages yet unborn.

Thou

Thou godlike offspring of a godlike ſire,
To him my kindeſt greetings, Medon, bear.
Farewel, Megiſtias, holy friend and brave.
Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief, 485
Demophilus, farewel. Farewel to thee,
Invincible Diomedon; to thee,
Unequall'd Dithyrambus; and to all,
Ye other dauntleſs warriors, who may claim
Praiſe from my lips, and friendſhip from my heart. 490
You after all the wonders, which your ſwords
Have here accompliſh'd, will enrich your names
By freſh renown. Your valour muſt compleat
What ours begins. Here firſt th' aſtoniſh'd foe
On dying Spartans ſhall with terror gaze, 495
And tremble while he conquers. Then, by fate
Led from his dreadful victory to meet
United Greece in phalanx o'er the plain,
By your avenging ſpears himſelf ſhall fall.

Forth from the aſſembly ſtrides Platæa's chief. 500
By the twelve gods, enthron'd in heav'n ſupreme;
By my fair name, unſully'd yet, I ſwear,
Thine eye, Leonidas, ſhall ne'er behold
Diomedon forſake thee. Firſt let ſtrength
Deſert my limbs, and fortitude my heart. 505
Did I not face the Marathonian war?
Have I not ſeen Thermopylæ? What more
Can fame beſtow, which I ſhould wait to ſhare?
Where can I, living, purchaſe brighter praiſe,
Than dying here? What more illuſtrious tomb 510
Can I obtain, than, bury'd in the heaps

Of

Of Persians, fall'n my victims, on this rock
To lie distinguish'd by a thousand wounds?
He ended; when Demophilus. O king
Of Lacedæmon, pride of human race, 515
Whom none e'er equall'd, but the seed of Jove,
Thy own forefather, number'd with the gods,
Lo! I am old. With falt'ring steps I tread
The prone descent of years. My country claim'd
My youth, my ripeness. Feeble age but yields 520
An empty name of service. What remains
For me unequal to the winged speed
Of active hours, which court the swift and young?
What eligible wish can wisdom form,
But to die well? Demophilus shall close 525
With thee, O hero, on this glorious earth
His eve of life. The youth of Thespia next
Address'd Leonidas. O first of Greeks,
Me too think worthy to attend thy fame
With this most dear, this venerable man, 530
For ever honour'd from my tend'rest age,
Ev'n till on life's extremity we part.
Nor too aspiring let my hopes be deem'd;
Should the Barbarian in his triumph mark
My youthful limbs among the gory heaps, 535
Perhaps remembrance may unnerve his arm
In future fields of contest with a race,
To whom the flow'r, the blooming joys of life,
Are less alluring than a noble death.
To him his second parent. Wilt thou bleed, 540
My Dithyrambus? But I here withhold

All

All counſel from thee, who art wiſe, as brave.
I know thy magnanimity. I read
Thy gen'rous thoughts. Decided is thy choice.
Come then, attendants on a godlike ſhade, 545
When to th' Elyſian anceſtry of Greece
Deſcends her great protector, we will ſhew
To Harmatides an illuſtrious ſon,
And no unworthy brother. We will link
Our ſhields together. We will preſs the ground, 550
Still undivided in the arms of death.
So if th' attentive traveller we draw
To our cold reliques, wond'ring, ſhall he trace
The diff'rent ſcene, then pregnant with applauſe,
O wiſe old man, exclaim, the hour of fate 555
Well didſt thou chooſe; and, O unequall'd youth,
Who for thy country didſt thy bloom devote,
May'ſt thou remain for ever dear to fame!
May time rejoice to name thee! O'er thy urn
May everlaſting peace her pinion ſpread! 560

THIS ſaid, the hero with his lifted ſhield
His face o'erſhades; he drops a ſecret tear:
Not this a tear of anguiſh, but deriv'd
From fond affection, grown mature with time,
Awak'd a manly tenderneſs alone, 565
Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret.

A STREAM of duty, gratitude and love
Flow'd from the heart of Harmatides' ſon,
Addreſſing ſtraight Leonidas, whoſe looks
Declar'd unſpeakable applauſe. O king 570
Of Lacedæmon, now diſtribute praiſe

From thy accuſtom'd juſtice, ſmall to me,
To him a portion large. His guardian care,
His kind inſtruction, his example train'd
My infancy, my youth. From him I learn'd 575
To live unſpotted. Could I leſs, than learn
From him to die with honour? Medon hears.
Shook by a whirlwind of contending thoughts,
Strong heaves his manly boſom, under awe
Of wiſe Meliſſa, torn by friendſhip, fir'd 580
By ſuch example high. In dubious ſtate
So rolls a veſſel, when th' inflated waves
Her planks aſſail, and winds her canvaſs rend;
The rudder labours, and requires a hand
Of firm, deliberate ſkill. The gen'rous king 585
Perceives the hero's ſtruggle, and prepares
To interpoſe relief; when inſtant came
Dieneces before them. Short he ſpake.

Barbarian myriads thro' the ſecret paſs
Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn 590
Expect them here. My ſlender force I ſpar'd.
There to have dy'd was uſeleſs. We return
With thee to periſh. Union of our ſtrength
Will render more illuſtrious to ourſelves,
And to the foe more terrible our fall. 595

Megistias laſt accoſts Laconia's king.
Thou, whom the gods have choſen to exalt
Above mankind in virtue and renown,
O call me not preſumptuous, who implore
Among theſe heroes thy regardful ear. 600
To Lacedæmon I a ſtranger came,

There

There found protection. There to honours rais'd,
I have not yet the benefit repaid.
That now the gen'rous Spartans may behold
In me their large beneficence not vain, 605
Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.

NOT so, Megistias, interpos'd the king.
Thou and thy son retire. Again the seer.

FORBID it, thou eternally ador'd,
O Jove, confirm my persevering soul! 610
Nor let me these auspicious moments lose,
When to my bounteous patrons I may shew,
That I deserv'd their favour. Thou, my child,
Dear Menalippus, heed the king's command,
And my paternal tenderness revere. 615
Thou from these ranks withdraw thee, to my use
Thy arms surrend'ring. Fortune will supply
New proofs of valour. Vanquish then, or find
A glorious grave; but spare thy father's eye
The bitter anguish to behold thy youth 620
Untimely bleed before him. Grief suspends
His speech, and interchangeably their arms
Impart the last embraces. Either weeps,
The hoary parent, and the blooming son.

BUT from his temples the pontific wreath 625
Megistias now unloosens. He resigns
His hallow'd vestments; while the youth in tears
The helmet o'er his parent's snowy locks,
O'er his broad chest adjusts the radiant mail.

DIENECES was nigh. Oppress'd by shame, 630
His downcast visage Menalippus hid

From him, who cheerful thus. Thou need'ſt not bluſh.
Thou hear'ſt thy father and the king command,
What I ſuggeſted, thy departure hence.
Train'd by my care, a ſoldier thou return'ſt. 635
Go, practiſe my inſtructions. Oft in fields
Of future conflict may thy prowefs call
Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewel.

While ſuch contempt of life, ſuch fervid zeal
To die with glory animate the Greeks, 640
Far diff'rent thoughts poſſeſs Argeſtes' ſoul.
Amaze and mingled terror chill his blood.
Cold drops, diſtill'd from ev'ry pore, bedew
His ſhiv'ring fleſh. His boſom pants. His knees
Yield to their burden. Ghaſtly pale his cheeks, 645
Pale are his lips and trembling. Such the minds
Of ſlaves corrupt; on them the beauteous face
Of virtue turns to horror. But theſe words
From Lacedæmon's chief the wretch relieve.

Return to Xerxes. Tell him, on this rock 650
The Grecians faithful to their truſt await
His choſen myriads. Tell him, thou haſt ſeen,
How far the luſt of empire is below
A freeborn ſpirit; that my death, which ſeals
My country's ſafety, is indeed a boon, 655
His folly gives, a precious boon, which Greece
Will by perdition to his throne repay.

He ſaid. The Perſian haſtens thro' the paſs.
Once more the ſtern Diomedon aroſe.
Wrath overcaſt his forehead, while he ſpake. 660

Yet

YET more muſt ſtay and bleed. Deteſted Thebes
Ne'er ſhall receive her traitors back. This ſpot
Shall ſee their perfidy aton'd by death,
Ev'n from that pow'r, to which their abject hearts
Have ſacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope, 665
Ye vile deſerters of the public weal,
Ye coward ſlaves, that, mingled in the heaps
Of gen'rous victims to their country's good,
You ſhall your ſhame conceal. Whoe'er ſhall paſs
Along this field of glorious ſlain, and mark 670
For veneration ev'ry nobler corſe;
His heart, tho' warm in rapturous applauſe,
A while ſhall curb the tranſport to repeat
His execrations o'er ſuch impious heads,
On whom that fate, to others yielding fame, 675
Is infamy and vengeance. Dreadful thus
On the pale Thebans ſentence he pronounc'd,
Like Rhadamanthus from th' infernal ſeat
Of judgment, which inexorably dooms
The guilty dead to ever-during pain; 680
While Phlegethon his flaming volumes rolls
Before their ſight, and ruthleſs furies ſhake
Their hiſſing ſerpents. All the Greeks aſſent
In clamours, echoing thro' the concave rock.
Forth Anaxander in th' aſſembly ſtood, 685
Which he addreſs'd with indignation feign'd.

IF yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,
Lo! I appear before you to demand,
Why theſe my brave companions, who alone
Among the Thebans thro' diſſuading crouds 690

Their paſſage forc'd to join your camp, ſhould bear
The name of traitors? By an exil'd wretch
We are traduc'd, by Demaratus, driv'n
From Spartan confines, who hath meanly ſought
Barbarian courts for ſhelter. Hath he drawn 695
Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before
Held him unworthy of his native ſway,
Should truſt him now, and doubt auxiliar friends?
Injurious men! we ſcorn the thoughts of flight.
Let Aſia bring her numbers; unconſtrain'd, 700
We will confront them, and for Greece expire.

Thus in the garb of virtue he adorn'd
Neceſſity. Laconia's king perceiv'd
Thro' all its fair diſguiſe the traitor's heart.
So when at firſt mankind in ſcience rude 705
Rever'd the moon, as bright in native beams,
Some ſage, who walk'd with nature thro' her works,
By wiſdom led, diſcern'd the various orb,
Dark in itſelf, in foreign ſplendors clad.

Leonidas concludes. Ye Spartans, hear; 710
Hear you, O Grecians, in our lot by choice
Partakers, deſtin'd to enrol your names
In time's eternal record, and enhance
Your country's luſtre: lo! the noontide blaze
Inflames the broad horizon. Each retire; 715
Each in his tent invoke the pow'r of ſleep
To brace his vigour, to enlarge his ſtrength
For long endurance. When the ſun deſcends,
Let each appear in arms. You, brave allies
Of Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ's tow'rs, 720
Arcadians,

Arcadians, Locrians, muſt not yet depart.
While we repoſe, embattled wait. Retreat,
When we our tents abandon. I reſign
To great Oïleus' ſon ſupreme command.
Take my embraces, Æſchylus. The fleet 725
Expects thee. To Themiſtocles report
What thou haſt ſeen and heard. O thrice farewel!
Th' Athenian anſwer'd. To yourſelves, my friends,
Your virtues immortality ſecure,
Your bright examples victory to Greece. 730

RETAINING theſe injunctions, all diſpers'd;
While in his tent Leonidas remain'd
Apart with Agis, whom he thus beſpake.
Yet in our fall the pond'rous hand of Greece
Shall Aſia feel. This Perſian's welcome tale 735
Of us, inextricably doom'd her prey,
As by the force of ſorcery will wrap
Security around her, will ſuppreſs
All ſenſe, all thought of danger. Brother, know,
That ſoon as Cynthia from the vault of heav'n 740
Withdraws her ſhining lamp, thro' Aſia's hoſt
Shall maſſacre and deſolation rage.
Yet not to baſe aſſociates will I truſt
My vaſt deſign. Their perfidy might warn
The unſuſpecting foe, our faireſt fruits 745
Of glory thus be wither'd. Ere we move,
While on the ſolemn ſacrifice intent,
As Lacedæmon's ancient laws ordain,
Our pray'rs we offer to the tuneful nine,
Thou whiſper thro' the willing ranks of Thebes 750

Slow

Slow and in ſilence to diſperſe and fly.
  Now left by Agis, on his couch reclin'd,
The Spartan king thus meditates alone.
  My fate is now impending. O my ſoul,
What more auſpicious period could'ſt thou chooſe 755
For death, than now, when, beating high in joy,
Thou tell'ſt me, I am happy? If to live,
Or die, as virtue dictates, be to know
The pureſt bliſs; if ſhe her charms diſplays
Still lovely, ſtill unfading, ſtill ſerene 760
To youth, to age, to death: whatever be
Thoſe other climes of happineſs unchang'd,
Which heav'n in dark futurity conceals,
Still here, O virtue, thou art all our good.
Oh! what a black, unſpeakable reverſe 765
Muſt the unrighteous, muſt the tyrant prove?
What in the ſtruggle of departing day,
When life's laſt glimpſe, extinguiſhing, preſents
Unknown, inextricable gloom? But how
Can I explain the terrors of a breaſt, 770
Where guilt reſides? Leonidas, forego
The horrible conception, and again
Within thy own felicity retire;
Bow grateful down to Him, who form'd thy mind
Of crimes unfruitful never to admit 775
The black impreſſion of a guilty thought.
Elſe could I fearleſs by delib'rate choice
Relinquiſh life? This calm from minds deprav'd
Is ever abſent. Oft in them the force
Of ſome prevailing paſſion for a time 780

Suppreſſes

Suppreſſes fear. Precipitate they loſe
The ſenſe of danger; when dominion, wealth,
Or purple pomp enchant the dazzled ſight,
Purſuing ſtill the joys of life alone.

But he, who calmly ſeeks a certain death, 785
When duty only, and the gen'ral good
Direct his courage, muſt a ſoul poſſeſs,
Which, all content deducing from itſelf,
Can by unerring virtue's conſtant light
Diſcern, when death is worthy of his choice. 790

The man, thus great and happy, in the ſcope
Of his large mind is ſtretch'd beyond his date.
Ev'n on this ſhore of being he in thought,
Supremely bleſs'd, anticipates the good,
Which late poſterity from him derives. 795

At length the hero's meditations cloſe.
The ſwelling tranſport of his heart ſubſides
In ſoft oblivion; and the ſilken plumes
Of ſleep envelop his extended limbs.

THE END OF THE TENTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE ELEVENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, riſing before ſun-ſet, diſmiſſes the forces under the command of Medon; but obſerving a reluctance in him to depart, reminds him of his duty, and gives him an affectionate farewel. He then relates to his own ſelect band a dream, which is interpreted by Megiſtias, arms himſelf, and marches in proceſſion with his whole troop to an altar, newly raiſed on a neighbouring meadow; there offers a ſacrifice to the muſes: he invokes the aſſiſtance of theſe goddeſſes; he animates his companions; then, placing himſelf at their head, leads them againſt the enemy in the dead of the night.

THE day was cloſing. Agis left his tent.
He ſought his god-like brother. Him he found
Stretch'd o'er his tranquil couch. His looks retain'd
The cheerful tincture of his waking thoughts
To gladden ſleep. So ſmile ſoft evening ſkies, 5
Yet ſtreak'd with ruddy light, when ſummer's ſuns
Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Tranſport fill'd
The eye of Agis. Friendſhip ſwell'd his heart.
His yielding knee in veneration bent,
The hero's hand he kiſs'd, then fervent thus. 10

O EXCEL-

O EXCELLENCE ineffable! receive
This secret homage; and may gentle sleep
Yet longer seal thine eyelids, that, unblam'd,
I may fall down before thee. He concludes
In adoration of his friend divine, 15
Whose brow the shades of slumber now forsake.
So, when the rising sun resumes his state,
Some white-rob'd magus on Euphrates side,
Or Indian seer on Ganges prostrate falls
Before th' emerging glory, to salute 20
That radiant emblem of th' immortal mind.

UP rise both heroes. From their tents in arms
Appear the bands elect. The other Greeks
Are filing homeward. Only Medon stops.
Melissa's dictates he forgets a while. 25
All inattentive to the warning voice
Of Melibœus, earnest he surveys
Leonidas. Such constancy of zeal
In good Oïleus' offspring brings the sire
To full remembrance in that solemn hour, 30
And draws these cordial accents from the king.

APPROACH me, Locrian. In thy look I trace
Consummate faith and love. But, vers'd in arms,
Against thy gen'ral's orders would'st thou stay?
Go, prove to kind Oïleus, that my heart 35
Of him was mindful, when the gates of death
I barr'd against his son. Yon gallant Greeks,
To thy commanding care from mine transferr'd,
Remove from certain slaughter. Last repair
To Lacedæmon. Thither lead thy sire. 40

Say

Say to her ſenate, to her people tell,
Here didſt thou leave their countrymen and king
On death reſolv'd, obedient to the laws.

THE Locrian chief, reſtraining tears, replies.
My ſire, left ſlumb'ring in the iſland-fane, 45
Awoke no more. Then joyful I ſhall meet
Him ſoon, the king made anſwer. Let thy worth
Supply thy father's. Virtue bids me die,
Thee live. Farewel. Now Medon's grief, o'eraw'd
By wiſdom, leaves his long-ſuſpended mind 50
To firm deciſion. He departs, prepar'd
For all the duties of a man, by deeds
To prove himſelf the friend of Sparta's king,
Meliſſa's brother, and Oïleus' ſon.

THE gen'rous victims of the public weal, 55
Aſſembled now, Leonidas ſalutes,
His pregnant ſoul diſburd'ning. O thrice hail!
Surround me, Grecians; to my words attend.
This evening's ſleep no ſooner preſs'd my brows,
Than o'er my head the empyreal form 60
Of heav'n-enthron'd Alcides was diſplay'd.
I ſaw his magnitude divine. His voice
I heard, his ſolemn mandate to ariſe.
I roſe. He bade me follow. I obey'd.
A mountain's ſummit, clear'd from miſt, or cloud, 65
We reach'd in ſilence. Suddenly the howl
Of wolves and dogs, the vulture's piercing ſhriek,
The yell of ev'ry beaſt and bird of prey
Diſcordant grated on my ear. I turn'd.
A ſurface hideous, delug'd o'er with blood, 70
Beyond

Beyond my view illimitably ſtretch'd,
One vaſt expanſe of horror. There ſupine,
Of huge dimenſion, cov'ring half the plain,
A giant corſe lay mangled, red with wounds,
Delv'd in th' enormous fleſh, which, bubbling, fed 75
Ten thouſand thouſand griſly beaks and jaws,
Inſatiably devouring. Mute I gaz'd;
When from behind I heard a ſecond ſound
Like ſurges, tumbling o'er a craggy ſhore.
Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd 80
With riven keels and ſhrouds, with ſhiver'd oars,
With arms and wel'tring carcaſſes beſtrewn
Innumerous. The billows foam'd in blood.
But where the waters, unobſerv'd before,
Between two adverſe ſhores, contracting, roll'd 85
A ſtormy current, on the beach forlorn,
One of majeſtic ſtature I deſcry'd
In ornaments imperial. Oft he bent
On me his clouded eyeballs. Oft my name
He ſounded forth in execrations loud; 90
Then rent his ſplendid garments; then his head
In rage diveſted of its graceful hairs.
Impatient now he ey'd a ſlender ſkiff,
Which, mounted high on boiſtrous waves, approach'd.
With indignation, with reluctant grief 95
Once more his ſight reverting, he embark'd
Amid the perils of the frowning deep.
O thou, by glorious actions rank'd in heav'n,
I here exclaim'd, inſtruct me. What produc'd
This deſolation? Hercules reply'd. 100

Let thy aſtoniſh'd eye again ſurvey,
The ſcene thy ſoul abhorr'd. I look'd. I ſaw
A land, where plenty with diſporting hands
Pour'd all the fruits of Amalthea's horn;
Where bloom'd the olive; where the cluſt'ring vine 105
With her broad foliage mantled ev'ry hill;
Where Ceres with exuberance enrob'd
The pregnant boſoms of the fields in gold;
Where ſpacious towns, whoſe circuits proud contain'd
The dazzling works of wealth along the banks 110
Of copious rivers ſhew'd their ſtately tow'rs,
The ſtrength and ſplendor of the peopled land.
Then in a moment clouds obſcur'd my view;
At once all vaniſh'd from my waking eyes.

THRICE I ſalute the omen, loud began 115
The ſage Megiſtias. In this myſtic dream
I ſee my country's victories. The land,
The deep ſhall own her triumphs; while the tears
Of Aſia and of Lybia ſhall deplore
Their offspring, caſt before the vulture's beak, 120
And ev'ry monſtrous native of the main.
Thoſe joyous fields of plenty picture Greece,
Enrich'd by conqueſt, and Barbarian ſpoils.
He, whom thou ſaw'ſt, in regal veſture clad,
Print on the ſand his ſolitary ſtep, 125
Is Xerxes, foil'd and fugitive. So ſpake
The rev'rend augur. Ev'ry boſom felt
Enthuſiaſtic rapture, joy beyond
All ſenſe, and all conception, but of thoſe,
Who die to ſave their country. Here again 130
Th' exulting band Leonidas addreſs'd.

SINCE

SINCE happineſs from virtue is deriv'd,
Who for his country dies, that moment proves
Moſt happy, as moſt virtuous. Such our lot.
But go, Megiſtias. Inſtantly prepare 135
The ſacred fuel, and the victim due;
That to the muſes (ſo by Sparta's law
We are enjoin'd) our off'rings may be paid,
Before we march. Remember, from the rites
Let ev'ry ſound be abſent; not the fife, 140
Not ev'n the muſic-breathing flute be heard.
Mean time, ye leaders, ev'ry band inſtruct
To move in ſilence. Mindful of their charge
The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides
His various armour. Agis cloſe attends, 145
His beſt aſſiſtant. Firſt a breaſt-plate arms
The ſpacious cheſt. O'er this the hero ſpreads
The mailed cuiraſs, from his ſhoulders hung.
A ſhining belt infolds his mighty loins.
Next on his ſtately temples he erects 150
The plumed helm; then graſps his pond'rous ſhield:
Where nigh the centre on projecting braſs
Th' inimitable artiſt had emboſs'd
The ſhape of great Alcides; whom to gain
Two goddeſſes contended. Pleaſure here 155
Won by ſoft wiles th' attracted eye; and there
The form of Virtue dignify'd the ſcene.
In her majeſtic ſweetneſs was diſplay'd
The mind ſublime and happy. From her lips
Seem'd eloquence to flow. In look ſerene, 160
But fix'd intenſely on the ſon of Jove,

She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the ſkies,
Her paths aſcended. On the ſummit ſtood,
Supported by a trophy near to heav'n,
Fame, and protended her eternal trump. 165
The youth, attentive to her wiſdom, own'd
The prevalence of Virtue; while his eye,
Fill'd by that ſpirit, which redeem'd the world
From tyranny and monſters, darted flames;
Not undeſcry'd by Pleaſure, where ſhe lay 170
Beneath a gorgeous canopy. Around
Were flowrets ſtrewn, and wantonly in rills
A fount mæander'd. All relax'd her limbs;
Nor wanting yet ſolicitude to gain,
What loſt ſhe fear'd, as ſtruggling with deſpair, 175
She ſeem'd collecting ev'ry pow'r to charm:
Exceſs of ſweet allurement ſhe diffus'd
In vain. Still Virtue ſway'd Alcides' mind.
Hence all his labours. Wrought with vary'd art,
The ſhield's external ſurface they enrich'd. 180

This portraiture of glory on his arm
Leonidas diſplays, and, tow'ring, ſtrides
From his pavilion. Ready are the bands.
The chiefs aſſume their ſtation. Torches blaze
Thro' ev'ry file. All now in ſilent pace 185
To join in ſolemn ſacrifice proceed.
Firſt Polydorus bears the hallow'd knife,
The ſacred ſalt and barley. At his ſide
Diomedon ſuſtains a weighty mace.
The prieſt, Megiſtias, follows like the reſt 190
In poliſh'd armour. White, as winter's fleece,

A fillet round his ſhining helm reveals
The ſacerdotal honours. By the horns,
Where laurels twine, with Alpheus Maron leads
The conſecrated ox. And lo! behind, 195
Leonidas advances. Never he
In ſuch tranſcendent majeſty was ſeen,
And his own virtue never ſo enjoy'd.
Succeſſive move Dieneces the brave;
In hoary ſtate Demophilus; the bloom 200
Of Dithyrambus, glowing in the hope
Of future praiſe; the gen'rous Agis *next*,
Serene and graceful; laſt the Theban chiefs,
Repining, ignominious: then ſlow march
The troops all mute, nor ſhake their brazen arms. 205
NOT from Thermopylæ remote the hills
Of Oeta, yielding to a fruitful dale,
Within their ſide, half-circling, had inclos'd
A fair expanſe in verdure ſmooth. The bounds
Were edg'd by wood, o'erlook'd by ſnowy cliffs, 210
Which from the clouds bent frowning. Down a rock,
Above the loftieſt ſummit of the grove,
A tumbling torrent wore the ſhagged ſtone;
Then, gleaming thro' the intervals of ſhade,
Attain'd the valley, where the level ſtream 215
Diffus'd refreſhment. On its banks the Greeks
Had rais'd a ruſtic altar, fram'd of turf.
Broad was the ſurface, high in piles of wood,
All interſpers'd with laurel. Purer deem'd,
Than river, lake, or fountain, in a vaſe 220
Old Ocean's briny element was plac'd

Before the altar; and of wine unmix'd
Capacious goblets ſtood. Megiſtias now
His helm unlooſen'd. With his ſnowy head,
Uncover'd, round the ſolemn pile he trod. 225
He ſhook a branch of laurel, ſcatt'ring wide
The ſacred moiſture of the main. His hand
Next on the altar, on the victim ſtrew'd
The mingled ſalt and barley. O'er the horns
Th' inverted chalice, foaming from the grape, 230
Diſcharg'd a rich libation. Then approach'd
Diomedon. Megiſtias gave the ſign.
Down ſunk the victim by a deathful ſtroke,
Nor groan'd. The augur bury'd in the throat
His hallow'd ſteel. A purple current flow'd. 235
Now ſmok'd the ſtructure, now it flam'd abroad
In ſudden ſplendor. Deep in circling ranks
The Grecians preſs'd. Each held a ſparkling brand;
The beaming lances intermix'd; the helms,
The burniſh'd armour multiply'd the blaze. 240
Leonidas drew nigh. Before the pile
His feet he planted. From his brows remov'd,
The caſque to Agis he conſign'd; his ſhield,
His ſpear to Dithyrambus; then, his arms
Extending, forth in ſupplication broke. 245

Harmonious daughters of Olympian Jove,
Who, on the top of Helicon ador'd,
And high Parnaſſus, with delighted ears
Bend to the warble of Caſtalia's ſtream,
Or Aganippe's murmur, if from thence 250
We muſt invoke your preſence; or along

The

The neighb'ring mountains with propitious ſteps
If now you grace your conſecrated bow'rs,
Look down, ye Muſes ; nor diſdain to ſtand
Each an immortal witneſs of our fate. 255
But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove,
And you moſt honour. Let her ſacred eyes
Approve her dying Grecians ; let her voice
In exultation tell the earth and heav'ns,
Theſe are her ſons. Then ſtrike your tuneful ſhells. 260
Record us guardians of our parent's age,
Our matron's virtue, and our children's bloom,
The glorious bulwarks of our country's laws,
Who ſhall ennoble the hiſtorian's page,
Shall on the joyous feſtival inſpire 265
With loftier ſtrains the virgin's choral ſong.
Then, O celeſtial maids, on yonder camp
Let night ſit heavy. Let a ſleep like death
Weigh down the eye of Aſia. O infuſe
A cool, untroubled ſpirit in our breaſts, 270
Which may in ſilence guide our daring feet,
Controul our fury, nor by tumult wild
The friendly dark affright ; till dying groans
Of ſlaughter'd tyrants into horror wake
The midnight calm. Then turn deſtruction looſe. 275
Let terror, let confuſion rage around,
In one vaſt ruin heap the barb'rous ranks,
Their horſe, their chariots. Let the ſpurning ſteed
Imbrue his hoofs in blood, the ſhatter'd cars
Cruſh with their brazen weight the proſtrate necks 280
Of chiefs and kings, encircled, as they fall,

By nations ſlain. You, countrymen and friends,
My laſt commands retain. Your gen'ral's voice
Once more ſalutes you, not to rouſe the brave,
Or minds, reſolv'd and dauntleſs, to confirm. 285
Too well by this expiring blaze I ſee
Impatient valour flaſh from ev'ry eye.
O temper well that ardour, and your lips
Cloſe on the riſing tranſport. Mark, how ſleep
Hath folded millions in his black embrace. 290
No ſound is wafted from th' unnumber'd foe.
The winds themſelves are ſilent. All conſpires
To this great ſacrifice, where thouſands ſoon
Shall only wake to die. Their crouded train
This night, perhaps, to Pluto's dreary ſhades 295
Ev'n Xerxes' ghoſt may lead, unleſs reſerv'd
From this deſtruction to lament a doom
Of more diſgrace, when Greece confounds that pow'r,
Which we will ſhake. But look, the ſetting moon
Shuts on our darkſome path her waining horns. 300
Let each his head diſtinguiſh by a wreath
Of well-earn'd laurel. Then the victim ſhare,
Then crown the goblet. Take your laſt repaſt;
With your forefathers, and the heroes old,
You next will banquet in the bleſt abodes. 305

Here ends their leader. Thro' th' encircling croud
The agitation of their ſpears denotes
High ardour. So the ſpiry growth of pines
Is rock'd, when Æolus in eddies winds
Among their ſtately trunks on Pelion's brow. 310
The Acarnanian ſeer diſtributes ſwift

The

The ſacred laurel. Snatch'd in eager zeal,
Around each helm the woven leaves unite
Their gloſſy verdure to the floating plumes.
Then is the victim portion'd. In the bowl 315
Then flows the vine's empurpled ſtream. Aloof
The Theban train, in wan dejection mute,
Brood o'er their ſhame, or caſt affrighted looks
On that determin'd courage, which, unmov'd
At fate's approach, with chearful lips could taſte 320
The ſparkling goblet, could in joy partake
That laſt, that glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart
Of Anaxander had forgot its wiles,
Diſſembling fear no longer. Agis here,
Regardful ever of the king's command, 325
Accoſts the Theban chiefs in whiſpers thus:

LEONIDAS permits you to retire.
While on the rites of ſacrifice employ'd,
None heed your motions. Separate and fly
In ſilent pace. This heard, th' inglorious troop, 330
Their files diſſolving, from the reſt withdraw.
Unſeen they moulder from the hoſt like ſnow,
Freed from the rigour of conſtraining froſt;
Soon as the ſun exerts his orient beam,
The tranſitory landſcape melts in rills 335
Away, and ſtructures, which delude the eye,
Inſenſibly are loſt. The ſolemn feaſt
Was now concluded. Now Laconia's king
Had reaſſum'd his arms. Before his ſtep
The croud roll backward. In their gladden'd ſight 340
His creſt, illumin'd by uplifted brands,

Its purple ſplendor ſhakes. The tow'ring oak
Thus from a lofty promontory waves
His majeſty of verdure. As with joy
The ſailors mark his heav'n-aſcending pride, 345
Which from afar directs their foamy courſe
Along the pathleſs ocean; ſo the Greeks
In tranſport gaze, as down their op'ning ranks
The king proceeds; from whoſe ſuperior frame
A ſoul like thine, O Phidias, might conceive 350
In Parian marble, or effulgent braſs
The form of great Apollo; when the god,
Won by the pray'rs of man's afflicted race,
In arms forſook his lucid throne to pierce
The monſter Python in the Delphian vale. 355
Cloſe by the hero Polydorus waits
To guide deſtruction thro' the Aſian tents.
As the young eagle near his parent's ſide
In wanton flight eſſays his vig'rous wing,
Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds, 360
To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,
And dye his beak in gore; by Sparta's king
The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares
His arm for death. He feaſts his angry ſoul
On promis'd vengeance. His impatient thoughts 365
Ev'n now tranſport him furious to the ſeat
Of his long ſorrows, not with fetter'd hands,
But now once more a Spartan with his ſpear,
His ſhield reſtor'd, to lead his country's bands,
And with them devaſtation. Nor the reſt 370
Neglect to form. Thick-rang'd, the helmets blend

Their

Their various plumes, as intermingling oaks
Combine their foliage in Dodona's grove;
Or as the cedars on the Syrian hills
Their ſhady texture ſpread. Once more the king, 375
O'er all the phalanx his conſid'rate view
Extending, thro' the ruddy gleam deſcries
One face of gladneſs; but the godlike van
He moſt contemplates: Agis, Alpheus there,
Megiſtias, Maron, with Platæa's chief, 380
Dieneces, Demophilus are ſeen
With Theſpia's youth: nor they their ſteady ſight
From his remove, in ſpeechleſs tranſport bound
By love, by veneration; till they hear
His laſt injunction. To their diff'rent poſts 385
They ſep'rate. Inſtant on the dewy turf
Are caſt th' extinguiſh'd brands. On all around
Drops ſudden darkneſs, on the wood, the hill,
The ſnowy ridge, the vale, the ſilver ſtream.
It verg'd on midnight Tow'rd the hoſtile camp 390
In march compos'd and ſilent down the paſs
The phalanx mov'd. Each patient boſom huſh'd
Its ſtruggling ſpirit, nor in whiſpers breath'd
The rapt'rous ardour, virtue then inſpir'd.
So louring clouds along th' etherial void 395
In ſlow expanſion from the gloomy north
A while ſuſpend their horrors, deſtin'd ſoon
To blaze in lightnings, and to burſt in ſtorms.

THE END OF THE ELEVENTH BOOK.

BOOK

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE TWELFTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas and the Grecians penetrate through the Perſian camp to the very pavilion of Xerxes, who avoids deſtruction by flight. The Barbarians are ſlaughter'd in great multitudes, and their camp is ſet on fire. Leonidas conducts his men in good order back to Thermopylæ, engages the Perſians, who were deſcended from the hills, and, after numberleſs proofs of ſuperior ſtrength and valour, ſinks down covered with wounds, and expires the laſt of all the Grecian commanders.

ACROSS th' unguarded bound of Aſia's camp
Slow paſs the Grecians. Thro' innum'rous tents,
Where all is mute and tranquil, they purſue
Their march ſedate. Beneath the leaden hand
Of ſleep lie millions motionleſs and deaf, 5
Nor dream of fate's approach. Their wary foes,
By Polydorus guided, ſtill proceed.
Ev'n to the center of th' extenſive hoſt
They pierce unſeen; when lo! th' imperial tent
Yet diſtant roſe before them. Spreading round 10
Th' auguſt pavilion, was an ample ſpace

For

For thouſands in arrangement. Here a band
Of choſen Perſians, watchful o'er the king,
Held their nocturnal ſtation. As the hearts
Of anxious nations, whom th' unſparing ſword, 15
Or famine threaten, tremble at the ſight
Of fear-engender'd phantoms in the ſky,
Aerial hoſts amid the clouds array'd,
Portending woe and death; the Perſian guard
In equal conſternation now deſcry'd 20
The glimpſe of hoſtile armour. All diſband,
As if auxiliar to his favour'd Greeks
Pan held their banner, ſcatt'ring from its folds
Fear and confuſion, which to Xerxes' couch,
Swift-winged, fly; thence ſhake the gen'ral camp, 25
Whoſe numbers iſſue naked, pale, unarm'd,
Wild in amazement, blinded by diſmay,
To ev'ry foe obnoxious. In the breaſts
Of thouſands, gor'd at once, the Grecian ſteel
Reeks in deſtruction. Deluges of blood 30
Float o'er the field, and foam around the heaps
Of wretches, ſlain unconſcious of the hand
Which waſtes their helpleſs multitude. Amaze,
Affright, diſtraction from his pillow chace
The lord of Aſia, who in thought beholds 35
United Greece in arms. Thy luſt of pow'r!
Thy hope of glory! whither are they flown
With all thy pomp? In this diſaſt'rous hour
What could avail th' immeaſurable range
Of thy proud camp, ſave only to conceal 40
Thy trembling ſteps, O Xerxes, while thou fly'ſt?

To thy deſerted couch with other looks
With other ſteps Leonidas is nigh.
Before him terror ſtrides. Gigantic death,
And deſolátion at his ſide attend. 45

The vaſt pavilion's empty ſpace, where lamps
Of gold ſhed light and odours, now admits
The hero. Ardent throngs behind him preſs,
But miſs their victim. To the ground are hurl'd
The glitt'ring enſigns of imperial ſtate. 50
The diadem, the ſceptre, late ador'd
Thro' boundleſs kingdoms, underneath their feet
In mingled rage and ſcorn the warriors cruſh
A ſacrifice to freedom. They return
Again to form. Leonidas exalts, 55
For new deſtruction his reſiſtleſs ſpear;
When double darkneſs ſuddenly deſcends.
The clouds, condenſing, intercept the ſtars.
Black o'er the furrow'd main the raging eaſt
In whirlwinds ſweeps the ſurge. The coaſts reſound. 60
The cavern'd rocks, the craſhing foreſts roar.
Swift thro' the camp the hurricane impels
Its rude career; when Aſia's numbers, veil'd
Amid the ſhelt'ring horrors of the ſtorm,
Evade the victor's lance. The Grecians halt; 65
While to their gen'ral's pregnant mind occurs
A new attempt and vaſt. Perpetual fire
Beſide the tent of Xerxes, from the hour
He lodg'd his ſtandards on the Malian plains,
Had ſhone. Among his Magi to adore 70
Great Horomazes was the monarch wont

Before

Before the ſacred light. Huge piles of wood
Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the conſtant flame.
On living embers theſe are caſt. So wills
Leonidas. The phalanx then divides. 75
Four troops are form'd, by Dithyrambus led,
By Alpheus, by Diomedon. The laſt
Himſelf conducts. The word is giv'n. They ſeize
The burning fuel. Sparkling in the wind,
Deſtructive fire is brandiſh'd. All, enjoin'd 80
To re-aſſemble at the regal tent,
By various paths the hoſtile camp invade.

Now devaſtation, unconfin'd, involves
The Malian fields. Among Barbarian tents
From diff'rent ſtations fly conſuming flames. 85
The Greeks afford no reſpite, and the ſtorm
Exaſperates the blaze. To ev'ry part
The conflagration like a ſea expands,
One waving ſurface of unbounded fire.
In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames 90
To heav'n's dark vault, and paint the midnight clouds.
So, when the north emits his purpled lights,
The undulated radiance, ſtreaming wide,
As with a burning canopy inveſts
Th' etherial concave. Oéta now diſclos'd 95
His forehead, glitt'ring in eternal froſt;
While down his rocks the foamy torrents ſhone.
Far o'er the main the pointed rays were thrown;
Night ſnatch'd her mantle from the ocean's breaſt;
The billows glimmer'd from the diſtant ſhores. 100

But lo! a pillar huge of ſmoke aſcends,
Which overſhades the field. There horror, there
Leonidas preſides. Command he gave
To Polydorus, who, exulting, ſhew'd,
Where Aſia's horſe and warlike cars poſſeſs'd 105
A crouded ſtation. At the hero's nod
Devouring Vulcan riots on the ſtores
Of Ceres, empty'd of the ripen'd grain,
On all the tribute from her meadows brown,
By rich Theſſalia render'd to the ſcythe. 110
A flood of fire envelopes all the ground.
The cordage burſts around the blazing tents.
Down ſink the roofs on ſuffocated throngs,
Cloſe-wedg'd by fear. The Libyan chariot burns.
Th' Arabian camel, and the Perſian ſteed, 115
Bound thro' a burning deluge. Wild with pain
They ſhake their ſinged manes. Their madding hoofs
Daſh thro' the blood of thouſands, mix'd with flames,
Which rage, augmented by the whirlwind's blaſt.

Meantime the ſcep'er'd lord of half the globe 120
From tent to tent precipitates his flight.
Diſpers'd are all his ſatraps. Pride herſelf
Shuns his dejected brow. Deſpair alone
Waits on th' imperial fugitive, and ſhews,
As round the camp his eye, diſtracted, roves, 125
No limits to deſtruction. Now is ſeen
Aurora, mounting from her eaſtern hill
In roſy ſandals, and with dewy locks.
The winds ſubſide before her; darkneſs flies;
A ſtream of light proclaims the chearful day, 130

Which

Which ſees at Xerxes' tent the conqu'ring bands,
All reunited. What could fortune more
To aid the valiant? what to gorge revenge?
Lo! deſolation o'er the adverſe hoſt
Hath empty'd all her terrors. Ev'n the hand 135
Of languid ſlaughter dropt the crimſon ſteel;
Nor nature longer can ſuſtain the toil
Of unremitted conqueſt. Yet what pow'r
Among theſe ſons of Liberty reviv'd
Their drooping warmth, new-ſtrung their nerves, recall'd
Their weary'd ſwords to deeds of brighter fame? 141
What, but th' inſpiring hope of glorious death
To crown their labours, and th' auſpicious look
Of their heroic chief, which, ſtill unchang'd,
Still in ſuperior majeſty declar'd, 145
No toil had yet relax'd his matchleſs ſtrength,
Nor worn the vigour of his godlike ſoul.

Back to the paſs in gentle march he leads
Th' embattled warriors. They behind the ſhrubs,
Where Medon ſent ſuch numbers to the ſhades, 150
In ambuſh lie. The tempeſt is o'erblown.
Soft breezes only from the Malian wave
O'er each grim face, beſmear'd with ſmoke and gore,
Their cool refreſhment breathe. The healing gale,
A cryſtal rill near Oeta's verdant feet, 155
Diſpel the languor from their harraſs'd nerves,
Freſh brac'd by ſtrength returning. O'er their heads
Lo! in full blaze of majeſty, appears
Meliſſa, bearing in her hand divine
Th' eternal guardian of illuſtrious deeds, 160

The ſweet Phœbean lyre. Her graceful train
Of white-rob'd virgins, ſeated on a range
Half down the cliff, o'erſhadowing the Greeks,
All with concordant ſtrings, and accents clear,
A torrent pour of melody, and ſwell 165
A high, triumphal, ſolemn dirge of praiſe,
Anticipating fame. Of endleſs joys
In bleſs'd Elyſium was the ſong. Go, meet
Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus ſage,
Let them ſalute the children of their laws. 170
Meet Homer, Orpheus, and th' Aſcræan bard,
Who with a ſpirit, by ambroſial food
Refin'd, and more exalted, ſhall contend
Your ſplendid fate to warble thro' the bow'rs
Of amaranth and myrtle ever young, 175
Like your renown. Your aſhes we will cull.
In yonder fane depoſited, your urns,
Dear to the Muſes, ſhall our lays inſpire.
Whatever off'rings genius, ſcience, art,
Can dedicate to virtue, ſhall be yours, 180
The gifts of all the Muſes, to tranſmit
You on th' enliven'd canvaſs, marble, braſs,
In Wiſdom's volume, in the poet's ſong,
In ev'ry tongue, thro' ev'ry age and clime,
You of this earth the brighteſt flow'rs, not cropt, 185
Tranſplanted only to immortal bloom
Of praiſe with men, of happineſs with gods.

THE Grecian valour on religion's flame
To ecſtaſy is wafted. Death is nigh.
As by the Graces faſhion'd, he appears 190

A beauteous

A beauteous form. His adamantine gate
Is half unfolded. All in tranſport catch
A glimpſe of immortality. Elate
In rapturous deluſion they believe,
That to behold and ſolemnize their fate 195
The goddeſſes are preſent on the hills
With celebrating lyres. In thought ſerene
Leonidas the kind deception bleſs'd,
Nor undeceiv'd his ſoldiers. After all
Th' inceſſant labours of the horrid night, 200
Thro' blood, thro' flames continu'd, he prepares
In order'd battle to confront the pow'rs
Of Hyperanthes from the upper ſtreights.

NOT long the Greeks in expectation wait
Impatient. Sudden with tumultuous ſhouts 205
Like Nile's rude current, where in deaf'ning roar
Prone from the ſteep of Elephantis falls
A ſea of waters, Hyperanthes pours
His choſen numbers on the Grecian camp
Down from the hills precipitant. No foes 210
He finds. The Thebans join him. In his van
They march conductors. On the Perſians roll,
In martial thunder, thro' the ſounding paſs.
They iſſue forth impetuous from its mouth.
That moment Sparta's leader gave the ſign; 215
When, as th' impulſive ram in forceful ſway
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its baſe,
And ſtrews a town with ruin, ſo the band
Of ſerry'd heroes down the Malian ſteep,
Tremendous depth! the mix'd battalions ſwept 220

Of

Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow'd.
Abrupt and naked all was rock beneath.
Leonidas, incens'd, with grappling strength
Dash'd Anaxander on a pointed crag;
Compos'd, then gave new orders. At the word 225
His phalanx, wheeling, penetrates the pass.
Astonish'd Persia stops in full career.
Ev'n Hyperanthes shrinks in wonder back.
Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore.
The Malian ooze o'erwhelms them. Sparta's king 230
Still presses forward, till an open breadth
Of fifty paces yields his front extent
To proffer battle. Hyperanthes soon
Recals his warriors, dissipates their fears.
Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud 235
Of darts is show'r'd. Th' encount'ring armies close.

WHO first, sublimest hero, felt thy arm?
What rivers heard along their echoing banks
Thy name, in curses sounded from the lips
Of noble mothers, wailing for their sons? 240
What towns with empty monuments were fill'd
For those, whom thy unconquerable sword
To vultures cast? First Bessus died,
A haughty satrap, whose tyrannic sway
Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves, 245
And laid her forests waste. For him the bees
Among the branches interwove their sweets;
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
In rich profusion o'er the goblet foam'd.
Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd; 250

He long aſſiduous, unavailing woo'd
The martial queen of Caria. She diſdain'd
A lover's ſoft complaint. Her rigid ear
Was fram'd to watch the tempeſt, while it rag'd,
Her eye accuſtom'd on the rolling deck 255
To brave the turgid billow. Near the ſhore
She now is preſent in her pinnace light.
The ſpectacle of glory crouds her breaſt
With diff'rent paſſions. Valiant, ſhe applauds
The Grecian valour; faithful, ſhe laments 260
Her ſad preſage of Perſia; prompts her ſon
To emulation of the Greeks in arms,
And of herſelf in loyalty. By fate
Is ſhe reſerv'd to ſignalize that day
Of future ſhame, when Xerxes muſt behold 265
The blood of nations overflow his decks,
And to their bottom tinge the briny floods
Of Salamis; whence ſhe with Aſia flies,
She only not inglorious. Low reclines
Her lover now, on Hermus to repeat 270
Her name no more, nor tell the vocal groves
His fruitleſs ſorrows. Next Maduces fell,
A Paphlagonian. Born amid the ſound
Of chafing ſurges, and the roar of winds,
He o'er th' inhoſpitable Euxine foam 275
Was wont from high Carambis' rock to ken
Ill-fated keels, which cut the Pontic ſtream,
Then with his dire aſſociates thro' the deep
For ſpoil and ſlaughter guide his ſavage prow.
Him dogs will rend aſhore. From Medus far, 280

Their

Their native current, two bold brothers dy'd,
Sisamnes and Tithraustes, potent lords
Of rich domains. On these Mithrines grey,
Cilician prince, Lilæus, who had left
The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields, 285
With Babylonian Tenagon expir'd.

The growing carnage Hyperanthes views
Indignant, fierce in vengeful ardour strides
Against the victor. Each his lance protends;
But Asia's numbers interpose their shields, 290
Solicitous to guard a prince rever'd:
Or thither fortune whelm'd the tide of war,
His term protracting for augmented fame.
So two proud vessels, lab'ring on the foam,
Present for battle their destructive beaks; 295
When ridgy seas, by hurricanes uptorn,
In mountainous commotion dash between,
And either deck, in black'ning tempests veil'd,
Waft from its distant foe. More fiercely burn'd
Thy spirit, mighty Spartan. Such dismay 300
Relax'd thy foes, that each Barbarian heart
Resign'd all hopes of victory. The steeds
Of day were climbing their meridian height.
Continu'd shouts of onset from the pass
Resounded o'er the plain. Artuchus heard. 305
When first the spreading tumult had alarm'd
His distant quarter, starting from repose,
He down the valley of Spercheos rush'd
To aid his regal master. Asia's camp
He found the seat of terror and despair. 310

As

As in ſome fruitful clime, which late hath known
The rage of winds and floods, altho' the ſtorm
Be heard no longer, and the deluge fled,
Still o'er the waſted region nature mourns
In melancholy ſilence; thro' the grove 315
With proſtrate glories lie the ſtately oak,
Th' uprooted elm and beech; the plain is ſpread
With fragments, ſwept from villages o'erthrown,
Around the paſtures flocks and herds are caſt
In dreary piles of death; ſo Perſia's hoſt 320
In terror mute one boundleſs ſcene diſplays
Of devaſtation. Half-devour'd by fire,
Her tall pavilions, and her martial cars,
Deform the wide encampment. Here in gore
Her princes welter, nameleſs thouſands there, 325
Not victims all to Greeks. In gaſping heaps
Barbarians, mangled by Barbarians, ſhew'd
The wild confuſion of that direful night;
When, wanting ſignals, and a leader's care,
They ruſh'd on mutual ſlaughter. Xerxes' tent, 330
On its exalted ſummit, when the dawn
Firſt ſtreak'd the orient ſky, was wont to bear
The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between
Two lucid cryſtals. This the gen'ral hoſt
Obſerv'd, their awful ſignal to arrange 335
In arms compleat, and numberleſs to watch
Their monarch's riſing. This conſpicuous blaze
Artuchus places in th' accuſtom'd ſeat.
As, after winds have ruffled by a ſtorm
The plumes of darkneſs, when her welcome face 340

The morning lifts ſerene, each wary ſwain
Collects his flock diſpers'd; the neighing ſteed,
The herds forſake their ſhelter: all return
To well-known paſtures, and frequented ſtreams:
So now this cheering ſignal on the tent 345
Revives each leader. From inglorious flight
Their ſcatter'd bands they call, their wonted ground
Reſume, and hail Artuchus. From their ſwarms
A force he culls. Thermopylæ he ſeeks.
Fell ſhouts in horrid diſſonance precede. 350

His phalanx ſwift Leonidas commands
To circle backward from the Malian bay.
Their order changes. Now, half-orb'd, they ſtand,
By Oeta's fence protected from behind,
With either flank united to the rock. 355
As by th' excelling architect diſpos'd
To ſhield ſome haven, a ſtupendous mole,
Fram'd of the grove and quarry's mingled ſtrength,
In ocean's boſom penetrates afar:
There, pride of art, immoveable it looks 360
On Eolus and Neptune; there defies
Thoſe potent gods combin'd: unyielding thus,
The Grecians ſtood a ſolid maſs of war
Againſt Artuchus, join'd with numbers new
To Hyperanthes. In the foremoſt rank 365
Leonidas his dreadful ſtation held.
Around him ſoon a ſpacious void was ſeen,
By flight or ſlaughter, in the Perſian van.
In gen'rous ſhame and wrath Artuchus burns,
Diſcharging full at Lacedæmon's chief 370

An

An iron-ſtudded mace. It glanc'd aſide,
Turn'd by the maſſy buckler. Prone to earth
The ſatrap fell. Alcander aim'd his point,
Which had transfix'd him proſtrate on the rock,
But for th' immediate ſuccour he obtain'd 375
From faithful ſoldiers, lifting on their ſhields
A chief belov'd. Not ſuch Alcander's lot.
An arrow wounds his heart. Supine he lies,
The only Theban, who to Greece preſerv'd
Unviolated faith. Phyſician ſage, 380
On pure Cithæron healing herbs to cull
Was he accuſtom'd, to expatiate o'er
The Heliconian paſtures, where no plants
Of poiſon ſpring, of juice ſalubrious all,
Which vipers, winding in their verdant track, 385
Drink and expel the venom from their tooth,
Dipt in the ſweetneſs of that ſoil divine.
On him the brave Artontes ſinks in death,
Renown'd thro' wide Bithynia, ne'er again
The clam'rous rites of Cybelé to ſhare; 390
While echo murmurs thro' the hollow caves
Of Berecynthian Dindymus. The ſtrength
Of Alpheus ſent him to the ſhades of night.
Ere from the dead was diſengag'd the ſpear,
Huge Abradates, glorying in his might, 395
Surpaſſing all of Ciſſian race, advanc'd
To grapple; planting firm his foremoſt ſtep,
The victor's throat he graſp'd. At Nemea's games
The wreſtler's chaplet Alpheus had obtain'd.
He ſummons all his art. Oblique the ſtroke 400

Of his ſwift foot ſupplants the Perſian's heel.
He, falling, clings by Alpheus' neck, and drags
His foe upon him. In the Spartan's back
Enrag'd Barbarians fix their thronging ſpears.
To Abradates' cheſt the weapons paſs; 405
They rivet both in death. This Maron ſees,
This Polydorus, frowning. Victims, ſtrewn
Before their vengeance, hide their brother's corſe.
At length the gen'rous blood of Maron warms
The ſword of Hyperanthes. On the ſpear 410
Of Polydorus falls the pond'rous axe
Of Sacian Mardus. From the yielding wood
The ſteely point is ſever'd. Undiſmay'd,
The Spartan ſtoops to rear the knotted mace,
Left by Artuchus; but thy fatal blade, 415
Abrocomes, that dreadful inſtant watch'd
To rend his op'ning ſide. Unconquer'd ſtill,
Swift he diſcharges on the Sacian's front
A pond'rous blow, which burſt the ſcatter'd brain.
Down his own limbs meantime a torrent flows 420
Of vital crimſon. Smiling, he reflects
On ſorrow finiſh'd, on his Spartan name,
Renew'd in luſtre. Sudden to his ſide
Springs Dithyrambus. Thro' th' uplifted arm
Of Mindus, pointing a malignant dart 425
Againſt the dying Spartan, he impell'd
His ſpear. The point with violence unſpent,
Urg'd by ſuch vigour, reach'd the Perſian's throat
Above his corſelet. Polydorus ſtretch'd
His languid hand to Theſpia's friendly youth, 430

Then

Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace.
While Mindus, wasted by his streaming wound,
Beside him faints and dies. In flow'ring prime
He, lord of Colchis, from a bride was torn,
His tyrant's hasty mandate to obey. 435
She tow'rd the Euxin sends her plaintive sighs;
She woos in tender piety the winds:
Vain is their favour; they can never breathe
On his returning sail. At once a croud
Of eager Persians seize the victor's spear. 440
One of his nervous hands retains it fast.
The other bares his faulchion. Wounds and death
He scatters round. Sosarmes feels his arm
Lopt from the shoulder. Zantis leaves entwin'd
His fingers round the long-disputed lance. 445
On Mardon's reins descends the pond'rous blade,
Which half divides his body. Pheron strides
Across the pointed ash. His weight o'ercomes
The weary'd Thespian, who resigns his hold;
But cleaves th' elate Barbarian to the brain. 450
Abrocomes darts forward, shakes his steel,
Whose lightning threatens death. The wary Greek
Wards with his sword the well-directed stroke,
Then, closing, throws the Persian. Now what aid
Of mortal force, or interposing heav'n, 455
Preserves the eastern hero? Lo! the friend
Of Teribazus. Eager to avenge
That lov'd, that lost companion, and defend
A brother's life, beneath the sinewy arm,
Outstretch'd, the sword of Hyperanthes pass'd 460

Thro' Dithyrambus. All the ſtrings of life
At once relax; nor fame, nor Greece demand
More from his valour. Proſtrate now he lies
In glories, ripen'd on his blooming head.
Him ſhall the Theſpian maidens in their ſongs 465
Record once lovelieſt of the youthful train,
The gentle, wiſe, beneficent, and brave.
Grace of his lineage, and his country's boaſt,
Now fall'n. Elyſium to his parting ſoul
Uncloſes. So the cedar, which ſupreme 470
Among the groves of Libanus hath tow'r'd,
Uprooted, low'rs his graceful top, preferr'd,
For dignity of growth, ſome royal dome
Or heav'n-devoted fabric to adorn.
Diomedon burſts forward. Round his friend 475
He heaps deſtruction. Troops of wailing ghoſts
Attend thy ſhade, fall'n hero! Long prevail'd
His furious arm in vengeance uncontroll'd;
Till four Aſſyrians on his ſhelving ſpear,
Ere from a Ciſſian's proſtrate body freed, 480
Their pond'rous maces all diſcharge. It broke.
Still with a ſhatter'd truncheon he maintains
Unequal fight. Impetuous thro' his eye
The well-aim'd fragment penetrates the brain
Of one bold warrior; there the ſplinter'd wood, 485
Infix'd, remains. The hero laſt unſheaths
His faulchion broad. A ſecond ſees, aghaſt
His entrails open'd. Sever'd from a third,
The head, ſteel-cas'd, deſcends. In blood is roll'd
The grizzly beard. That effort breaks the blade 490

Short

Short from its hilt. The Grecian ſtands diſarm'd.
The fourth, Aſtaſpes, proud Chaldæan lord,
Is nigh. He lifts his iron-plated mace.
This, while a cluſter of auxiliar friends
Hang on the Grecian ſhield, to earth depreſs'd, 495
Loads with unerring blows the batter'd helm;
Till on the ground Diomedon extends
His mighty limbs. So, weaken'd by the force
Of ſome tremendous engine, which the hand
Of Mars impels, a citadel, high-tow'rd, 500
Whence darts, and fire, and ruins, long have aw'd
Begirding legions, yields at laſt, and ſpreads
Its diſuniting ramparts on the ground;
Joy fills th' aſſailants, and the battle's tide
Whelms o'er the widening breach: the Perſians thus 505
O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd
Againſt the Grecian remnant: when behold
Leonidas. At once their ardor froze.
He had a while behind his friends retir'd,
Oppreſs'd by labour. Pointleſs was his ſpear, 510
His buckler cleft. As, overworn by ſtorms,
A veſſel ſteers to ſome protecting bay;
Then, ſoon as timely gales, inviting, curl
The azure floods, to Neptune ſhews again
Her maſts apparell'd freſh in ſhrouds and ſails, 515
Which court the vig'rous wind: ſo Sparta's king,
In ſtrength repair'd, a ſpear and buckler new
Preſents to Aſia. From her bleeding ranks
Hydarnes, urg'd by deſtiny, approach'd.
He, proudly vaunting, left an infant race, 520

A ſpouſe lamenting on the diſtant verge
Of Bactrian Ochus. Victory in vain
He, parting, promis'd. Wanton hope will ſport
Round his cold heart no longer. Grecian ſpoils,
Imagin'd triumphs, pictur'd on his mind, 525
Fate will eraſe for ever. Thro' the targe,
The thick-mail'd corſelet, his divided cheſt,
Of bony ſtrength, admits the hoſtile ſpear.
Leonidas draws back the ſteely point,
Bent and enfeebled by the forceful blow. 530
Meantime, within his buckler's rim, unſeen,
Amphiſtreus ſtealing, in th' unguarded flank
His dagger ſtruck. In ſlow effuſion ooz'd
The blood, from Hercules deriv'd; but death
Not yet had reach'd his mark. Th' indignant king 535
Gripes irreſiſtibly the Perſian's throat.
He drags him proſtrate. Falſe, corrupt, and baſe,
Fallacious, fell; pre-eminent was he
Among tyrannic ſatraps. Phrygia pin'd
Beneath th' oppreſſion of his ruthleſs ſway. 540
Her ſoil had once been fruitful. Once her towns
Were populous and rich. The direful change
To naked fields and crumbling roofs declar'd,
Th' accurs'd Amphiſtreus govern'd. As the ſpear
Of Tyrian Cadmus rivetted to earth 545
The pois'nous dragon, whoſe infectious breath
Had blaſted all Bœotia; ſo the king,
On prone Amphiſtreus trampling, to the rock
Nails down the tyrant, and the fractur'd ſtaff
Leaves in his panting body. But the blood, 550

Great

Great hero, dropping from thy wound, revives
The hopes of Perſia. Thy unyielding arm
Upholds the conflict ſtill. Againſt thy ſhield
The various weapons ſhiver, and thy feet
With glitt'ring points ſurround. The Lydian ſword, 555
The Perſian dagger, leave their ſhatter'd hilts;
Bent is the Caſpian ſcymetar; the lance,
The javelin, dart, and arrow, all combine
Their fruitleſs efforts. From Alcides ſprung,
Thou ſtand'ſt unſhaken like a Thracian hill, 560
Like Rhodope, or Hæmus; where in vain
The thund'rer plants his livid bolt; in vain
Keen-pointed lightnings pierce th' encruſted ſnow;
And winter, beating with eternal war,
Shakes from his dreary wings diſcordant ſtorms, 565
Chill ſleet, and clatt'ring hail. Advancing bold,
His rapid lance Abrocomes in vain
Aims at the forehead of Laconia's chief.
He, not unguarded, rears his active blade
Athwart the dang'rous blow, whoſe fury waſtes 570
Above his creſt in air. Then, ſwiftly wheel'd,
The pond'rous weapon cleaves the Perſian's knee
Sheer thro' the parted bone. He ſidelong falls.
Cruſh'd on the ground beneath contending feet,
Great Xerxes' brother yields the laſt remains 575
Of tortur'd life. Leonidas perſiſts;
Till Agis calls Dieneces, alarms
Demophilus, Megiſtias: they o'er piles
Of Allarodian and Saſperian dead
Haſte to their leader: they before him raiſe 580

The

The brazen bulwark of their maſſy ſhields.
The foremoſt rank of Aſia ſtands and bleeds;
The reſt recoil; but Hyperanthes ſwift
From band to band his various hoſt pervades,
Their drooping hopes rekindles, in the brave 585
New fortitude excites: the frigid heart
Of fear he warms. Aſtaſpes firſt obeys,
Vain of his birth, from ancient Belus drawn,
Proud of his wealthy ſtores, his ſtately domes,
More proud in recent victory: his might 590
Had foil'd Platæa's chief. Before the front
He ſtrides impetuous. His triumphant mace
Againſt the brave Dieneces he bends.
The weighty blow bears down th' oppoſing ſhield,
And breaks the Spartan's ſhoulder. Idle hangs 595
The weak defence, and loads th' inactive arm,
Depriv'd of ev'ry function. Agis bares
His vengeful blade. At two well levell'd ſtrokes
Of both his hands, high brandiſhing the mace,
He mutilates the foe. A Sacian chief 600
Springs on the victor. Jaxartes' banks
To this brave ſavage gave his name and birth.
His look erect, his bold deportment ſpoke
A gallant ſpirit, but untam'd by laws,
With dreary wilds familiar, and a race 605
Of rude Barbarians, horrid as their clime.
From its direction glanc'd the Spartan ſpear,
Which, upward borne, o'erturn'd his iron cone.
Black o'er his forehead fall the naked locks;
They aggravate his fury: while his foe 610
Repeats

Repeats the ſtroke, and penetrates his cheſt.
Th' intrepid Sacian thro' his breaſt and back
Receives the griding ſteel. Along the ſtaff
He writhes his tortur'd body; in his graſp
A barbed arrow from his quiver ſhakes; 615
Deep in the ſtreaming throat of Agis hides
The deadly point; then grimly ſmiles, and dies.

From him fate haſtens to a nobler prey,
Dieneces. His undefended frame
The ſhield abandons, ſliding from his arm. 620
His breaſt is gor'd by javelins. On the foe
He hurls them back, extracted from his wounds.
Life, yielding ſlow to deſtiny, at length
Forſakes his riven heart; nor leſs in death
Thermopylæ he graces, than before 625
By martial deeds and conduct. What can ſtem
The barb'rous torrent? Agis bleeds. His ſpear
Lies uſeleſs, irrecoverably plung'd
In Jaxartes' body. Low reclines
Dieneces. Leonidas himſelf, 630
O'erlabour'd, wounded, with his dinted ſword
The rage of war can exerciſe no more.
One laſt, one glorious effort, age performs.
Demophilus, Megiſtias, join their might.
They check the tide of conqueſt; while the ſpear 635
Of ſlain Dieneces to Sparta's chief
The fainting Agis bears. The pointed aſh,
In that dire hand for battle rear'd anew,
Blaſts ev'ry Perſian's valour. Back in heaps
They roll, confounded, by their gen'ral's voice 640

In

In vain exhorted longer to endure
The ceaſeleſs waſte of that unconquer'd arm.
So, when the giants from Olympus chac'd
Th' inferior gods, themſelves in terror ſhun'd
Th' inceſſant ſtreams of lightning, where the hand 645
Of heav'n's great father with eternal might
Suſtain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field
A while Bellona gives the battle reſt;
When Theſpia's leader and Megiſtias drop
At either ſide of Lacedæmon's king. 650
Beneath the weight of years and labour bend
The hoary warriors. Not a groan moleſts
Their parting ſpirits; but in death's calm night
All-ſilent ſinks each venerable head:
Like aged oaks, whoſe deep-deſcending roots 655
Had pierc'd reſiſtleſs thro' a craggy ſlope;
There, during three long centuries, have brav'd
Malignant Eurus, and the boiſt'rous north;
Till bare and ſapleſs by corroding time,
Without a blaſt their moſſy trunks recline 660
Before their parent hill. Not one remains,
But Agis, near Leonidas, whoſe hand
The laſt kind office to his friend performs,
Extracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd,
Pours forth in crimſon floods. O Agis, pale 665
Thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs;
They loſe their graces. Dimm'd, thy eyes reveal
The native goodneſs of thy heart no more.
Yet other graces ſpring. The noble corſe
Leonidas ſurveys. A pauſe he finds 670

To

To mark how lovely are the patriot's wounds,
And ſee thoſe honours on the breaſt he lov'd.
But Hyperanthes from the trembling ranks
Of Aſia's tow'rs, inflexibly reſolv'd
The Perſian glory to redeem, or fall. 675
The Spartan, worn by toil, his languid arm
Upliſts once more. He waits the dauntleſs prince.
The heroes now ſtand adverſe. Each a while
Reſtrains his valour. Each, admiring, views
His godlike foe. At length their brandiſh'd points 680
Provoke the conteſt, fated ſoon to cloſe
The long-continu'd horrors of the day.
Fix'd in amaze and fear, the Aſian throng,
Unmov'd and ſilent on their bucklers pauſe.
Thus on the waſtes of India, while the earth 685
Beneath him groans, the elephant is ſeen
His huge proboſcis writhing, to defy
The ſtrong rhinoceros, whoſe pond'rous horn
Is newly whetted on a rock. Anon
Each hideous bulk encounters. Earth her groan 690
Redoubles. Trembling, from their covert gaze
The ſavage inmates of ſurrounding woods
In diſtant terror. By the vary'd art
Of either chief the dubious combat long
Its great event retarded. Now his lance 695
Far thro' the hoſtile ſhield Laconia's king
Impell'd. Aſide the Perſian ſwung his arm.
Beneath it paſs'd the weapon, which his targe
Encumber'd. Hopes of conqueſt and renown
Elate his courage. Sudden he directs 700
His rapid javelin to the Spartan's throat.
But he his wary buckler upward rais'd,

Which o'er his ſhoulder turn'd the glancing ſteel;
For one laſt effort then his ſcatter'd ſtrength
Collecting, levell'd with reſiſtleſs force 705
The maſſive orb, and daſh'd its brazen verge
Full on the Perſian's forehead. Down he ſunk,
Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd
Beneath a marble fragment, from its ſeat
Heav'd by a whirlwind, ſweeping o'er the ridge 710
Of ſome aſpiring manſion. Gen'rous prince!
What could his valour more? His ſingle might
He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell
Before his native bands. The Spartan king
Now ſtands alone. In heaps his ſlaughter'd friends, 715
All ſtretch'd around him, lie. The diſtant foes
Show'r on his head innumerable darts.
From various ſluices guſh the vital floods;
They ſtain his fainting limbs. Nor yet with pain
His brow is clouded; but thoſe beauteous wounds, 720
The ſacred pledges of his own renown,
And Sparta's ſafety, in ſereneſt joy
His cloſing eye contemplates. Fame can twine
No brighter laurels round his glorious head;
His virtue more to labour fate forbids, 725
And lays him now in honourable reſt,
To ſeal his country's liberty by death.

FINIS.